

THE THEATRE OF THE HINDUS..

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The first eight chapters of this book are reprinted from *Select Specimens of the Theatre of the Hindus* by Horace Hayman Wilson, Third Edition, 1871, which contains, besides translations of six Sanskrit dramas, short accounts of twenty-three different Sanskrit plays. Only the introductory portion and the author's remarks on Sanskrit dramas and the dramatic system of the Hindus have been included in this volume.'

The subsequent four chapters are reprints of articles which originally appeared in different periodicals from time to time.

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P R E F A C E

Many years have elapsed since the translation of *Sakuntala*, by Sir William Jones, announced to the literary public of the western world that the Hindus had a national drama, the merits of which, it was inferred from those of the specimen published, might render it worthy of further investigation.

Notwithstanding the expectation thus excited, the subject has received little subsequent illustration. The translation of the *Prabodha-Chandrodaya*, or "Rise of the Moon of Intellect," by Dr. Taylor of Bombay, throws more light upon the metaphysics than the drama of the Hindus; and the account given of the *Malati Madhava* in the "Asiatic Researches," by Colebrooke, was subordinate to the object of his essay on *Sanskrit* and *Prakrit* prosody, and was unlikely to fall in the way of general readers. These two contributions, therefore, to the elucidation of Hindu dramatic literature, have added but little to the notice secured for it by the publication of *Sakuntala*.

The objects for which an ancient dialect may be studied are its philology and its literature, or the arts and sciences, the notions and manners, the history and belief of the people by whom it was spoken. Particular branches of composition may be preferably cultivated for the due understanding of each of these subjects, but there is no one species which will be found to embrace so many purposes as the dramatic. The dialogue varies from simple to elaborate, from the conversation of ordinary life to the highest refinements of poetical taste. The illustrations are drawn from every known product of art, as well as every observable phenomenon of nature. The manners and feelings of the people are delineated, living and breathing before us, and history and religion furnish the most important and interesting topics to the bard. Wherever, therefore, there exists a dramatic literature, it must be pre-eminently entitled to the attention of the philosopher as well as the philologist, of the man of general literary taste as well as the professional scholar.

Independent, however, of the claims to notice which the Hindu theatre possesses, upon principles that equally apply to the dramatic literature of every nation, it may advance pretensions to consideration on its own account, connected both with its peculiar merits and with the history of the stage.

Neither of the dramas, hitherto published, *Sakuntala* or the *Prabodha Chandrodaya*, can be considered to convey an accurate notion of the Hindu theatre. Each is but the species of its own genus. The latter belongs to the metaphysical, the former to the mythico-pastoral class of Sanskrit plays; but these two varieties are far from representing every class and order. Their wide dissimilarity might lead us to anticipate the extensive range of the theatre to which they belong, and to infer that where such striking distinctions were to be found, others less decidedly marked must prevail. The inference would be justified by the fact, and the Hindu theatre affords examples of the drama of domestic, as well as of heroic life; of original invention as well as of legendary traditions.

At the same time, there are many peculiarities belonging to the Hindu theatre which it is necessary that we should know, before we can safely delineate the history, or propose the theory of the drama. Hitherto the views of all writers upon the subject have been circumscribed by the practice which alone was open to their observation, and their speculations have been grounded upon the narrow basis which the dramatic literature of classical antiquity supplied. To this must now be superadded the conclusions that are to be derived from the dramatic compositions of the Hindus.

The theatrical representations of modern Europe, however diversified by national features, are the legitimate offspring of the classical drama. Widely as the mysteries and moralities differed from the plays of *Æschylus* or *Aristophanes*, they emanated from the only schools where those writers were read, and the cultivation of the cloister, unembued with the animation of social life, produced no worthier harvest than those crude and absurd compositions. Such as they were, however, they formed the connecting link between the ancient and the modern theatre, and allied the compositions of *Shakespeare*, *Lope de Vega*, and *Racine*, with the songs of *Bacchus* and the monologues of *Thespis*.

Whatever may be the merits or defects of the Hindu drama, it may be safely asserted that they do not spring from the same parent, but are unmixedly its own. The science of the Hindus may be indebted to modern discoveries in other regions, and their mythology may have derived legions from Paganism or Christianity, but it is impossible that they should have borrowed their dramatic compositions from the people either of ancient or modern times. The nations of Europe possessed no dramatic literature before the fourteenth or fifteenth century, at which period the Hindu drama had passed into its decline. Mohammedan literature has

ever been a stranger to theatrical writings, and the Mussulman conquerors of India could not have communicated what they never possessed. There is no record that theatrical entertainments were ever naturalised amongst the ancient Persians, Arabs, or Egyptians; and the Hindus, if they learned the art from others, can have been obliged alone to the Greeks or to the Chinese. A perusal of the Hindu plays will show how little likely it is that they are indebted to either, as, with the exception of a few features in common which could not fail to occur, they present characteristic varieties of conduct and construction which strongly evidence both original design and national development.

The Hindu theatre belongs to that division of dramatic composition which modern critics have agreed to term romantic, in opposition to what some schools have been pleased to call classical. This has not escaped the observation of one of the first dramatic critics of any age, and Schlegel observes, "The drama of *Sakuntala* presents, through its oriental brilliancy of colouring, so striking a resemblance, upon the whole, to our romantic drama, that it might be suspected the love of Shakespeare had influenced the translator, if other orientalists had not borne testimony to the fidelity of his translation." The Hindu dramatic literature will afford ample evidence to the same effect.

Hindu dramatists have little regard for the unities of time and place; and if by unity of action be meant singleness of incident, they exhibit an equal disdain for such a restriction. At the same time, as we shall subsequently see, they are not destitute of systematic and sensible rules, and they are as unfamiliar with the extravagance of the Chinese drama, as with the severe simplicity of Grecian tragedy.

There is one peculiarity in the Hindu theatre which remarkably distinguishes it from that of every other people. Although there is little reason to doubt that the Sanskrit language was once a spoken tongue in some parts of India, yet it does not seem probable that it was ever the vernacular language of the whole country, and it certainly ceased to be a living dialect at a period of which we have no knowledge.

The greater part of every play is written in Sanskrit. None of the dramatic compositions at present known can boast perhaps of a very high antiquity, and several of them are comparatively modern; they must, therefore, have been unintelligible to a considerable portion of their audiences, and never could have been so directly addressed to the bulk of the population, as to have exercised much influence upon their passions or their tastes.

This circumstance, however, is perfectly in harmony with the constitution of Hindu society, by which the highest bran-

ches of literature, as well as the highest offices in the state, were reserved for the privileged tribes of Kshattriyas and Brahmans. Even amongst them, however, a small portion could have followed the expressions of the actors so as to have felt their full force, and the plays of the Hindus must therefore have been exceedingly deficient in theatrical effect. In some measure, this deficiency was compensated by peculiar impressions, and the popularity of most of the stories, and the sanctity of the representation, as well as of the Sanskrit language, substituted an adventurous interest for ordinary excitement. Still the appeal to popular feeling must have been immeasurably weakened, and the affectation or reality of scholarship, as at the Latin plays of Arioste, or the scholastic exhibitions of Westminster, must have been a sorry substitute for universal, instantaneous, and irrepressible delight.

Besides being an entertainment appropriated to the leading or learned members of society, the dramatic entertainments of the Hindus essentially differed from those of modern Europe in the infrequency of their representation. They seem to have been acted only on solemn or public occasions. In this respect they resembled the dramatic performances of the Athenians, which took place at distant intervals, and especially at the spring and autumnal festivals of Bacchus, the last being usually preferred, as the city was then filled with strangers, its tributaries and allies. According to Hindu authorities, the occasions suitable for dramatic representations are the lunar holidays, a royal coronation, assemblages of people, affairs and religious festivals, marriages, the meeting of friends, taking first possession of a house or a town, and the birth of a son. The most ordinary occasion, however, of a performance was, as will be seen, the season peculiarly sacred to some divinity.

Amongst the Athenians, also, a piece was never performed a second time, at least under the same form; and it is clear that the Hindu plays are written with a view to but one specific representation. At other times, and in other places, probably, successful dramas were repeated both in Greece and India; but this was a distant and accidental, and not, as with us, an immediate and anticipated consequence of success.

As the plays of the Hindus were only occasionally enacted, we can readily comprehend why they should be so much longer than our dramatic writings, and why they should be so few. The Hindu plays do not, like the Chinese, it is true, afford employment for ten days, but they sometimes extend, as we shall see, to ten acts, and those none of the shortest, and they must have occupied

at least five or six hours in representation. With respect to their number, Sir William Jones was undoubtedly misinformed, when he was led to suppose that the Indian theatre would fill as many volumes as that of any nation in ancient or modern Europe. Many pieces, no doubt, are lost, and others are scarce; but it may be doubted whether all the plays that are to be found, and those of which mention is made by writers on the drama, amount to many more than sixty. We may form a tolerably accurate estimate of the extent of the Hindu theatre by the fact, that no more than three plays are attributed to each of the great masters of the art, Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa; a most beggarly account, when contrasted with the three hundred and sixty-five comedies of Antiphanes, or the two thousand of Lope de Vega.

Although, however, the plays of the Hindus must have been less numerous than those of any of the nations of highest repute in theatrical literature, yet they must have existed in some number, to have offered the multiplied classes into which they have been divided by their critics, and which exhibit at least no want of variety. It may also be observed, that the dramatic pieces which have come down to us are those of the highest order, defended by their intrinsic purity from the corrosion of time. Those of an inferior description, and which existed sometimes apparently in the vernacular dialects, may have been more numerous and popular, and were more, strictly speaking, national. Traces of these are still observable in the dramatised stories of the *Bhāns* or professional buffoons, in the *Jātras* of the Bengalis, and the *Rāsas* of the Western Provinces. The first is the representation of some ludicrous adventure by two or three performers, carried on in extempore dialogue, usually of a very coarse kind, and enlivened by the practical jokes not always very decent. The *Jātra* is generally the exhibition of some of the incidents in the youthful life of Krishna, maintained also in extempore dialogue, but interspersed with popular songs. The mistress of Krishna, Rādhā, his father, mother, and the Gopis, are the ordinary *dramatis personae*, and Nārada acts as buffo. The *Rāsa* partakes more of the ballet, but it is accompanied also with songs, whilst the adventures of Krishna or Rāma are represented in appropriate costume, by measured gesticulations. The Hindus have a strong relish for these diversions, but the domination under which they so long pined, and which was ever so singularly hostile to public enjoyments of a refined character, rendered theatrical representations infrequent, and induced a neglect of dramatic literature. Plays, however, continued to be written

and performed to the latest periods, especially in the west and south of India, where Hindu principalities still subsisted. Performances also seem to have been exhibited at Benares in recent times, and we have one piece which was written, and possibly represented in Bengal, but a very few years ago. All the modern compositions, however, are of mythological and sectarian character, and are intended to celebrate the power of Krishna or Siva. They are also discriminated from older writings by the predominance of narrative, and by wire-drawn commonplace descriptions of the periods of the day or the season of the year, of the rising and setting of the sun or moon, of the scorching heats of the summer or the reviving influence of spring. There is no attempt at incident beyond the original story, and many of the subjects for action, which the legend affords, are thrown into dull and tiresome dialogue. These defects are, indeed, to be found occasionally in several of the earlier pieces, but to a limited extent, whilst they form the substance of all later compositions.

When the art of theatrical composition had passed its zenith, and began to exhibit symptoms of decay, the same fate befell it in India which it encountered in other countries, and criticism usurped the authority of creation. Plays gave way to theories, and system-mongers took the place of dramatists and poets. Indian criticism, however, has been always in its infancy. It never feared to connect causes and effects; it never looked to the influence exercised by imagination or passion in poetry; it never, in short, became either poetical or philosophical. Technicalities were the only objects within its comprehension, and it delighted to elicit dogmatical precepts from the practice of established authors. The question of the "unities" is quite within the sphere of the Indian critic, had the poets ever descended to their observance. Some approach, as observed above, has been made to this important theme, but a text was wanted for its due appreciation. In the absence of this, and of loftier discussion, the critics of the Hindu school set themselves to classify plays, persons, and passions, until they wove a complicated web out of very spider-like materials. The distinctions thus multiplied are curious in themselves, and of some value for the record they afford of the compositions whence they are derived, and it has been thought advisable, therefore, to annex a view of the system, assigning to it a distinct section, as it can have little to attract or entertain general readers.

CHAPTER I

THE DRAMATIC SYSTEM OF THE HINDUS *

THE AUTHORITIES OF THE HINDU DRAMATIC SYSTEM

The invention of dramatic entertainments is usually ascribed by Hindu writers to a *Muni*, or inspired sage, named *Bharata*; but, according to some authorities, they had a still more elevated origin, and the art having been gathered from the *Vedas* by the god *Brahma*, was by him communicated to the *Muni*. The dramatic representations first invented consisted of three kinds: *Nātya*, *Nṛitya* and *Nṛitta*; and these were exhibited before the gods by the *Gandharbas* and *Apsarasas*, the Spirits and Nymphs of Indra's heaven, who were trained by *Bharata* to the exhibition. *Siva* added to these two other styles of performance, the *Tandava* and *Lasya*.

Of these different modes of representation, only one, the *Nātya*, is properly the dramatic, being defined to be gesticulation with language. The *Nṛitya* is gesticulation without language, or pantomime; and the *Nṛitta* is simple dancing. The *Tandava* and *Lasya*, which appear to be grafts upon the original system, are merely styles of dancing; the former so named from *Tandu*, one of *Siva*'s attendants, whom the god instructed in it; whilst the *Lasya*, it is said, was taught by *Parvali* to the princess *Usha*, who instructed the *Gopis* of *Dwaraka*, the residence of her husband, in the art; by them it was communicated to the women of *Surashtra*, and from them it passed to the females of various regions.

In these legends, as well as in the radical purport of the three original terms, we observe the intimate connexion between the idea of dancing and dramatic representation, which no doubt subsisted in the classical drama. The dances of the Chorus were no less important than their songs, and the arrangement of the ballet was as much the task of the author as the invention of the plot.

The attribution of dramatic performances to *Bharata* is no doubt founded upon his having been one of the earliest writers, by whom the art was reduced to a system. His *Sutras*, or aphorisms, are constantly cited by commentators on different plays, and suggest the doctrines which are taught by later authors: but, as far as has been ascertained, the work of *Bharata* has no existence in an entire shape, and it may be sometimes doubted whether the rules attributed

to him are not fabricated for the occasion. This is not of much importance, as there are scarcely any debatable points in the technicalities of the drama, and the aphorisms, whether genuine or not, conform to the principles generally recognised in the standard authorities: a short notice of the principal of which will not perhaps be thought misplaced in this stage of the Inquiry.

One of the best and earliest existing treatises on dramatic literature is the *Dasa-Rupaka*, or description of the ten kinds of theatrical composition, of which the term *Rupaka*, that which has a form, is the most appropriate designation. This work is exclusively devoted to dramatic criticism. It consists of a Text and Gloss, with examples. The Text is the composition of Dhananjaya, the son of Vishnu, who styles Munja his patron, and who consequently wrote in the eleventh century, by which time, therefore, the dramatic art of the Hindus was complete, or rather was in its decline. The Gloss might be thought to be by the same hand as the text, the author being Dhanika, the son of Vishnu; agreeing in the patronymic, and differing little in the name. Amongst his illustrations, however, a number of passages are cited from the *Ratnavali*, a play written in the beginning of the twelfth century, which is rather incompatible with the author of the *Dasa-Rupaka*'s having written in the eleventh. There is also another difficulty in the title of the commentator, who calls himself an officer of a different prince, Maharaja Srimad Utpala Raja Mahasadhyapala, the chief usher, or minister of the illustrious Utpala Raja. Whether *Utpala* be the name of a prince or a country is uncertain, but in neither case can it apply to Munja or Bhoja. The date of the Gloss must therefore remain undetermined, although as the work is but rarely met with, it is no doubt of some antiquity. Ranganath, a commentator on the *Vikrama* and *Urvasi*, cites a comment on the *Dasa-Rupaka* by a writer named Pani (Pani virachita Dasa Rupaka tikayam), which, it is found, may tend to throw some light upon the history of this work.

The *Saraswati Kanthabharana* is a work ascribed to Bhoja Raja. It treats generally of poetical or rhetorical composition, in five books, the last of which comprehends many of the details peculiar to dramatic writing. The examples quoted are from a variety of poems and plays, and they offer the same difficulty, as to the accuracy of the attribution, as the *Dasa Rupaka*, by including illustrations from the *Ratnavali*. We might expect the plays of Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti to be quoted, and we have no grounds for suspecting any anachronism in the examples derived from the *Mudra-Rakshasa* and *Venus Sanhara*: but Bhoja must have

reigned some years later, or Harsha some years earlier, than has been hitherto believed on scarcely disputable grounds, for a composition of the one to be cited by the other. There is a commentary on this work by Ratneswara Māliopadhyaya, but he takes no notice of the author.

The *Kavya-Prakasa* is also a work on rhetorical composition in general, and is an authority of great repute, as well as the preceding. It is divided into ten sections, in different portions of which are scattered such details relating to dramatic writings as are common to them and other poems, illustrated, as in the preceding, by extracts from the most celebrated poems, which, however, are never named, either in this or in many other works of the same class. It is necessary, therefore, to be able to identify the passages from previous reading, to derive from these treatises that information respecting Sanskrit literary history which they are capable of affording. The author of the *Kavya-Prakasa* is Mammata-Bhatta, a Kashmirian, and the work is prior to that next described, although subsequent to the *Ratnavali*, and may be about five centuries old.

The *Sahitja-Darpana* is also a work of great merit and celebrity, on poetical writing, in ten sections, of which the sixth is mostly appropriated to theatrical technicalities. The quotations from the different plays are specified, and all the principal pieces collected by me are named, besides several of which copies are not procurable. The date of the work is not known, but it is comparatively modern, and subsequent to the *Kavya Prakasa*. One manuscript of it exists, which was copied, according to the date, in Saka 1426 or A.D. 1504. It is the work of a Bengali pandit of the medical caste, Viswanatha Kaviraja, the son of Chandra-Sekhara, and is especially current as an authority in Bengal. According to universally-received tradition, the author lived beyond the Brahmaputra, in the district of Dacca.

The *Sangita Ratnakara*, as the name implies, treats more especially of singing and dancing than of dramatic literature. It furnishes, however, some curious notices of theatrical representation and gesture. It is the work of Saranga-Deva, the son of Sorhala, the son of Bhaskara, a Kashmirian pandit, who sought his fortunes in the south. His grandson is patronised by a prince named Sinhala-Deva, but of what time or place he does not inform us. It is clear, however, that he wrote between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, as he names Bhoja amongst his predecessors in the science; and a comment on his own work was written, by Kallinatha, by desire of Praudha, or Pratapa Deva king of Vijayanagar, from A.D. 1456 to 1477.

Amongst the works which treat generally *de Arte Poetica*, and which are exceedingly numerous, some of the principal are, the *Kavyadarsa* by Dandin, the author of the *Dasa-Kumara*, and supposed to be contemporary with Bhoja; the *Kavyalankara Vritti*, by Vamana-Acharya; the *Kuvalaya nanda*, an enlargement of the *Chandraloka* of Jayadeva, by Apyaya Dikshita, who was patronised by Krishna Raya, sovereign of Vijaynagar about 1520; the *Alankara Sarvaswa* of Bhama; the *Rasa-Gangadhara* of Jagannatha Pandita Raja, and the *Alankara Kaustubha* by Kavi Karnapuraka, a Vaishnava Gosain, who illustrates all his rules by verses of his own, relating to the loves of Krishna and Radha, and the pastimes of the deity with the Gopis of Vrindavana.

Besides the general systems, there are several treatises on the passions and emotions which poetry is intended to depict or excite, as the *Sringara Tilaka* of Rudra Bhatta; and the *Rasa Manjari* and the *Rasa Tarangini* of Bhanu Datta. The latter comprises a number of rules, which are quoted as those of Bharata.

In addition to the information derivable from these sources, as to the system or history of the Hindu drama, the commentaries by which several of the plays are accompanied furnish important accessions to our knowledge of both. With respect also to the latter, we have in the *Bhoja Prabandha* and *Sarngdhara-Paddhati*, two satisfactory guides for the verification of the writers prior to their respective dates. Of the *Bhoja Prabandha* I have given an account elsewhere, and have seen no reason to alter the opinion there expressed. The *Sarngdhara-Paddhati* is a similar catalogue of earlier writers written by Sarngdhara, the grandson of Raghava Deva, the spiritual guide of Hammira, prince of Sakambhari, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. This work is consequently not later than the end of the fourteenth or the beginning of the fifteenth century, and determines within that limit the existence of the writers it names, several of whom are included amongst the dramatic authors, as we shall have hereafter occasion to notice.

These different authorities, it might be thought, would afford a tolerably distinct and accurate view of the dramatic literature of the Hindus, and will no doubt convey quite sufficient for our purpose. The brevity and obscurity, however, of the technical definitions, the inconceivable inaccuracy of the manuscripts, and the little knowledge of the subject which the pandits generally possess, have rendered the taste of interpreting them laborious and painful, to an extent of which readers accustomed to typographic facilities can form no adequate conception.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF DRAMATIC ENTERTAINMENTS

The general term for all dramatic compositions is *Rupaka*—from *rūpa*, form,—it being their chief object to embody characters and feelings, and to exhibit the natural indications of passion. A play is also defined, a Poem that is to be seen, or a Poem that is to be seen and heard.

Dramatic writings are arranged in two classes, the *Rupakas* properly so termed, and the *Uparupakas*, the minor or interior *Rupakas* "le theatre du second ordre," although not precisely in the same sense. There are ten species of the former, and eight of the latter class.

RUPAKAS

The *Nataka*, or the Play *par excellence*, comprises all the elements of a dramatic composition, and its construction, therefore, is fully explained in the original systems, before any notice is taken of the interior varieties. This method is perhaps the most logical, and obviates the necessity of some repetition; but in an inquiry of the present description, the first point to determine appears to be, what the dramatic amusements of the Hindus really were, before we examine their constituent parts.

Specimens of the *Nataka* are not wanting to illustrate its technical description, and we can therefore follow the original authorities with entire confidence. It is declared to be the most perfect kind of dramatic composition. The subject should always be celebrated and important. According to the *Salitri Darpana*, the story should be selected from mythological or historical record alone; but the *Dasa-Rupaka* asserts that it may be also fictitious or mixed, or partly resting on tradition, and partly the creation of the author. The practice of the early writers seems to have sanctioned the latter rule, and although they adopted their plots from sacred poems or *Puranas*, they considered themselves at liberty to vary the incidents as they pleased. Modern bards have been more scrupulous. The restriction imposed upon the selection of the subject is the same as that to which the French theatre so long submitted, from whose tragic code all newly invented topics were excluded, in supposed imitation of the Greek theatre, in which however the *Flower of Agathon*, founded altogether upon fiction, was an early and popular production.

Like the Greek tragedy, however, the *Nataka* is to represent worthy or exalted personages only, and the hero must be a monarch, as Dushyanta; a demigod, as Rama; or a divinity, as Krishna. The action, or more properly the passion, should be but one, as love or

heroism. The plot should be simple, the incidents consistent; the business should spring direct from the story as a plant from its seed, and should be free from episodical and prolix interruptions. The time should not be protracted, and the duration of an act, according to the elder authority, should not exceed one day; but the *Sahitya-Darpana* extends it to a few days, or even to one year. When the action cannot be comprised within these limits, the less important events may be thrown into narrative, or may be supposed to pass between the acts; or they may be communicated to the audience by one of the actors, who holds the character of an interpreter, and explains to the persons of the assembly whatever they may require to know, or what is not conveyed to them by the representation; a rather awkward contrivance to supply the deficiencies of the piece, but one that would sometimes be useful to insinuate the plot into the audiences of more polished communities. The diction of a *Nataka* should be perspicuous and polished. The piece should consist of not fewer than five acts, and not more than ten.

In many of these characteristics, the *Nataka* presents an obvious analogy to the tragedy of the Greeks, which was, "the imitation of a solemn and perfect action, of adequate importance, told in pleasing language, exhibiting the several elements of dramatic composition in its different parts, represented through the instrumentality of agents, not by narration, and purifying the affections of human nature by the influence of pity and terror." In the expansion of this definition in the "Poetics," there are many points of affinity, and particularly in the selection of persons and subjects; but there are also differences, some of which merit to be noticed.

With regard to the Unities, we have that of action fully recognised, and a simplicity of business is enjoined quite in the spirit of the Greek drama. The unity of place is not noticed, as might have been expected from the probable absence of all scenic embellishment. It was impossible to transport the substantial decorations of the Grecian stage from place to place, and therefore the scene was the same throughout; but where everything was left to the imagination, one site was as easily conceivable as another, and the scene might be fancied, one while a garden, and another while a palace, as well as it could be imagined to be either. The unity of time is curiously modified, conformably to a principle which may satisfy the most fastidious; and "the time required for the tale elapses invariably between the acts." In practice there is generally less latitude than the rule indicates, and the duration of an act is very commonly that of the representation, or at most "one course of the sun," the

night elapsing in the interval. In one piece, the *Uttara-Rama-Charitra*, indeed, we have a more extensive period, and twelve years are supposed to pass between the first and second acts. This was the unavoidable consequence of the subject of the play, and affords an analogy to the licence of the romantic drama.

Another important difference from the classical drama, and from that of most countries, is the total absence of the distinction between Tragedy and Comedy. The Hindu plays confine themselves neither to the "crimes nor to the absurdities of mankind;" neither "to the momentous changes, nor lighter vicissitudes of life;" neither "to the terrors of distress nor the gaieties of prosperity." In this respect they may be classed with much of the Spanish and English drama, to which, as Schlegel observes, "the terms Tragedy and Comedy are wholly inapplicable, in the sense in which they were employed by the ancients." They are invariably of a mingled web, and blend "seriousness and sorrow with levity and laughter." They never offer, however, a calamitous conclusion, which, as Johnson remarks, was enough to constitute a Tragedy in Shakespeare's days; and although they propose to excite all the emotions of the human breast, terror and pity included, they never effect this object by leaving a painful impression upon the mind of the spectator. The Hindus, in fact, have no Tragedy; a defect that subverts the theory that Tragedy necessarily preceded Comedy, because in the infancy of society the stronger passions, predominated, and if was not till social intercourse was complicated and refined, that the follies and frivolities of mankind afforded material for satire. The theory is evidently more ingenious than just, for a considerable advance in refinement must have been made before plays were written at all, and the days of Æschylus were not those of the fierce and fiery emotions he delineates. In truth, however, the individual and social organisation of the native of India is unfavourable to the development of towering passion; and whatever poets or philosophers may have insinuated to the contrary, there is no doubt that the regions of physical equability have ever been, and still are, those of moral extremes.

The absence of tragic catastrophe in the Hindu dramas is not merely an unconscious omission; such catastrophe is prohibited by a positive rule, and the death of either the hero or the heroine is never to be announced. With that regard, indeed, for decorum, which even Voltaire thought might be sometimes dispensed with, it is not allowed in any manner "*ensanglanter la scene*" and death must invariably be inflicted out of the view of the spectators. Attention to bienseance is carried even to a further extent, and a number

of inferdicitions are peculiar to the system of the Hindus. The excepted topics of a serious nature are, hostile defiance, solemn imprecations, exile, degradation and national calamity ; whilst those of a less grave, or comic character, are biting, scratching, kissing, eating, steeping, the bath, inunction, and the marriage ceremony. Dramatic writers, especially those of a modern date, have sometimes violated these precepts ; but in general the conduct of what may be termed the classical drama of the Hindus is exemplary and dignified. Nor is its moral purport neglected ; and one of their writers declares, in an illustration familiar to ancient and modern poetry, that the chief end of the theatre is to disguise, by the insidious sweet, the unpalatable but salutary bitter, of the cup.

The extent of the Hindu plays is another peculiarity in which they differ from the dramatic writings of other nations ; and even the *Robbers*, or *Don Carlos*, will suffer in the comparison of length. The *Mrichchhakati* would make at least three of the plays of *Aeschylus*. In actual representation, however, a Hindu play constituted a less unreasonable demand upon the patience of an audience than an Athenian performance, consisting at one sitting of three Tragedies and a Farce. If the Hindu stage exhibited a long play, it exhibited that alone.

The compositions of the first class, or *Natakas*, are comparatively frequent, and some of them are amongst the best specimens of the art. *Sakuntala*, the *Mudra-Rakshasa*, the *Vesu-Sauhara*, *Anargha-Raghava*, and several others, belong to this order. The first is well known by the version of Sir William Jones.

The second species of *Rupaka* is the *Prakarana*, which agrees in all respects with the *Nataka*, except that it takes a rather less elevated range. The fable is to be a pure fiction drawn from real life in a reputable class of society, and the most appropriate subject is love. The hero may be of ministerial rank or a Brahman, or a merchant of respectability. The heroine may be a maid of family, or a courtesan. In the former case, the *Prakarana* is termed *Suddha*, or pure ; in the latter, *Sankirna* or mixed. By the *Vesya*, or courtesan, however, we are not to understand a female who has disregarded the obligations of law or the precepts of virtue, but a character reared by a state of manners unfriendly to the admission of wedded females into society, and opening it only at the expense of reputation to women, who were trained for association with men by personal and mental acquirements to which the matron was a stranger. The *Vesya* of the Hindus was the *Hetera* of the Greeks. Without the talents of *Aspasia*, or profligacy of

Lais, the *Vasanta-sena* of the *Mrichchhakati*, is a gentle, affectionate being, who, with the conventions of society in her favour, unites, as the *Hetera* often did, "accomplishment's calculated to dazzle, with qualities of the heart which raise her above the contempt that, in spite of all precaution, falls upon her situation." The *Mrichchhakati*, and *Malati-Madhava*, belong to the class of *Prakaranas*.

The *Bhana*, according to the technical definition, is a monologue in one act, in which the performer narrates dramatically a variety of occurrences as happening either to himself or others. Love, war, fraud, intrigue, and imposition, are appropriate topics, and the narrator may enliven his recitation by a supposititious dialogue with an imaginary interlocutor. The language must be polished, and music and singing should precede and close the performance. The example quoted is the *Lilamadhukara*, but the only specimen met with is the *Sarada Tilaka*, of which some account is given in the following pages. It is not impossible that ventriloquism assisted to give effect to the imaginary dialogue, as the art is not unknown in India.

The *Vyayoga* is a dramatic representation of some military transaction, in which no part of the interest is derived from female participation; the sentiment of love is consequently excluded from it, and it admits of no comic intermixture. It is restricted to one act, one action, and a duration of one day, and the hero should be a warrior or demigod. The *Sahitya-Darpana* names the *Saugandhikaharana* as an example, the *Dasa-Rupaka* specifies the *Jamadagnya-Jaya*, the latter alluding either to the defeat of Kartaviryarjuna, or to the subjugation of the military tribe by the Brahmanical hero Parasu-Rama, the son of Jamadagni. The subject of the former would seem to be the rape of a princess named Saugandhika, only that the interest springing from such an event would contravene the rule that relates to female exclusion, and it may refer to the conflict between Vasishtha and Viswamitra for the all-bestowing cow. The *Dhananjaya-Vijaya* belongs to this class.

The *Samavakara* is the dramatic representation of some mythological fable in three acts; the business of the first is to occupy about nine hours; the second, three and a half; and the third, an hour and a half. The story of the piece relates to gods and demons, although mortals may be introduced. There is no individual hero, or the heroes may be as many as twelve, as Krishna and other divinities. The metre is that most usually employed in the *Vedas*, or the verses termed *Ushnih* and *Gayatri*. Although love may be touched upon, heroism should be the predominant passion; and the acts of enmity may be exhibited, both covert and

avowed, such as ironical commendation and open defiance. Tempests, combats, and the storming of towns may be represented, and all the pride and pomp of war, as horses, elephants and cars, may be introduced. The example quoted, but which no longer exists in its dramatised form is the *Samudra Manthana*, the Churning of the Ocean : a splendid subject for spectacle if well managed. We may doubt the success of the Hindus mechanicians in representing the mountain and the snake, the churning staff and rope, or the agitations of the mighty main, from which sprang the personifications of health and beauty, and the beverage of immortality : this was, in all probability, clumsily contrived ; but the gods and demons were well dressed and better acted, and with the patronage of a Raja, the conflicts between the hosts of heaven and hell for the goddess of beauty and the cup of ambrosia, were no doubt got up with no want of numbers or of splendour. This entertainment must have been popular, as it was addressed more to the eye than the ear. As a mere spectacle it still exists, and in the western provinces the history of Rama is represented in the dramatic form at the *Dasahara* on a vast, if not a magnificent scale. The followers of the contending chiefs, Rama and Ravana, amount sometimes to several hundreds ; the battlements of Lanka, though of less durable materials, are of vast extent, and the encounters that take place are more like the mimic evolutions of real armies than a dramatic exhibition. It is scarcely necessary to add, that it occurs in the open air, usually in a spacious plain, and with a want of order that ruins its dramatic effect. The more pleasing, as the best-conducted parts of the business, are the processions. The entry of Rama and Sita into Benares in the year 1820, formed a richly picturesque and interesting scene.*

The *Dima* is a drama of similar but more gloomy character than the last, and is limited to the representation of terrific events, as portents, incantations, sieges, and battles. It comprehends four acts. The hero should be a demon, demi-god or diety. The example named is the *Tripuradaha*, the destruction of the demon Tripura by Siva, and conflagration of the three cities over which he ruled and whence he derived his appellation.

The *Ilamriga* is a piece of intrigue in four acts, in which the hero is a god or illustrious mortal, and the heroine a goddess. Love and mirth are prevailing sentiments. The heroine may be the subject of war or stratagem, and the devices of the hero may end in disappointment but not in

* In Princep's illustrations of Benares, part m. are interesting representations of this scene and one which precedes it, the capture of Lanka.

From this general sketch of the varieties of the Hindu Theatre, we shall now proceed to examine what in their notions constituted a play; under the heads of its Dramatic Arrangement; the Conduct of the Plot; the Characters of the Drama; the Objects of Dramatic Representation and the means by which they were effected, or the Diction and Scenic Apparatus.

was spoken, for the general stage direction, *Nandyante Sutradharah*, "at the end of the *Nandi* the *Sutradhara*," seems to imply that it was not recited by this individual, the manager or conductor, the person who holds the thread or regulation of the business; but an aphorism of Bharata is cited, which says, "Let the *Sutradhara* recite the *Nandi* in a tone neither high nor low." If, however, he does not enter until it is recited, he must perform the recitation behind the scenes. Another text is cited from Bharata, which says, "Having read the *Nandi*, let the *Sutradhara* go off and the *Sthapaka* enter." And the *Sangita-Kalpataru* has "Let the *Sutradhara*, or some other person entering on the stage, pronounce the *Nandi*." The commentator on the *Mudra-Rakshasa* observes, therefore, "that it is equally correct to apply the ellipse after *Nandyante* by either *pathati* 'reads', or *pravisati* 'enters': in the former case the *Sutradhara* reciting the *Nandi* and then continuing the induction; in the latter, the benediction being pronounced by a different individual." It seems not unlikely that it was the intention of the original writers, although the commentators may not have understood it, to discriminate between the real and assumed personage of the *Sutradhara*, who spoke the benediction in his own character or as a Brahman, which he must have been, and then carried on the dialogue of the prelude as the manager of the theatrical corps. The *Sutradhara* was expected to be a man of no inferior qualifications; and according to the technical description of him, he was to be well versed in light literature, as narrative, plays, and poetry: he should be familiar with various dialects; acquainted with the customs of different classes and the manners of various people, experienced in dramatic details, and conversant with different mechanical arts."

The prayer is usually often followed by some account of the author of the piece, which is always in a strain of panegyric, very different from the self-dispraising tone adopted by European dramatists, although no doubt more sincere. The induction must in most cases have been the work of the author of the play, but it may sometimes have been the composition of another hand. The introduction of the *Mrichchhakati* notices the death of the individual to whom the play is ascribed. In some places, the mention of the author is little more than the particularisation of his name.

The notice of the author is in general followed by a complimentary appeal to the favour of the audience, in a style with which we are perfectly familiar, and the manager occasionally gives a dramatic representation of himself and his concerns, as in the *Mrichchhakati* and *Mudra-Rakshasa*, in a dialogue between him and one of his company, either an

actor or an actress, who is termed the *Pariparsvika*, or associate. The dialogue sometimes advert's to occurrences prior to the story of the piece, as in the *Uttara-Rama-Charitra*, where the manager and actor are supposed to be inhabitants of Ayodhya, and describe the departure of Rama's guests, as if they had just witnessed it. In the *Yeru-Sanhara*, too, it, should appear that they are inmates of the Pandava camp; and in the *Mudra Rakshasa*, the manager appears as an inhabitant of Pataliputra. In other preludes the connexion is less immediate. In that of *Sakuntala* the actress sings a song descriptive of the hot season for the amusement of the audience; and in *Malati and Madhava* the manager and his companion declare the characters they are to play. In every case, however, the conclusion of the prelude, termed the *Pistarana* prepares the audience for the entrance of one of the dramatic personages, who appears either by simply naming him as in *Sakuntala*, where the manager abruptly exclaims, "Here comes the King Dushyanta", or by uttering something he is supposed to overhear, and to which he advances to reply, as in the *Mrichchhakali* and *Mudra Rakshasa*.

The piece, being thus opened, is carried on in the manner with which the theatres of Europe are familiar, or the division of scenes and acts.

The scene may be considererd to be marked, as in the French drama, by the entrance of one character and the exit of another, for in general the stage is never left empty in the course of the act, nor does total change of place often occur. The rule, however, in this respect, is not very rigidly observed, and contrivances have been resorted to, to fill up the seeming chasm which such an interruption as a total change of scene requires, and to avoid that solecism which the entrance of a character, whose approach is unannounced, is

the Elizabethan period of our stage. The clumsiness of these supplementary performers seems not to have escaped the notice of the Hindu dramatists, and they are sometime interwoven with the piece, as in the *Jan Sankara*, where a scene between two goblins, who are seeking their banquet upon the field of battle, is considered to be chiefly intended to connect the business of the drama, and prepare the audience for the death of Drona, which they behold and describe; and the description of the combat between Lava and Chandraketu, in the *Uttara Rama Charitra*, by the two spirits of air, is a similar and still happier substitute for an interpreter. The employment of the *Vishambha* and *Praresaka* is indicated by a simple naming of them, and what either is to do or say is left to the person who fills the character.

The act, or *Anka*, is said to be marked by the exit of all the personages a definition which is equally applicable to the practice of the French theatre. Of the duration of the act we have already spoken, and it will have been seen in the enumeration of the different species of theatrical compositions, that the number of acts varies from one to ten. The *Hannama*, *Nataka* indeed has fourteen; but it will be seen by the abstract account of that drama that it is a poem rather than a play, or at most a piece of patchwork in which the fragments of an old play have been eked out by poetic narrative,

are successful in maintaining the character of their exode, the business being rarely completed before the concluding act. The piece closes as it began, with a characteristic benediction or prayer, which is always repeated by the principal personage, and expresses his wishes for general plenty and happiness.

CONDUCT OF THE PLOT

The business of every piece is termed its *Vastu*; its substance or thing, the *pragmā* or *rasa*.

It is of two kinds, principal and secondary, or essential and episodical.

Every Business involves five elements, the *Vija*, *Vinda*, *Pataka*, *Prakari*, and *Karya*.

The *Vija* or the seed, is the circumstance from which the business arises. The policy of the prime minister in the *Ratnavali* is the seed, or remote cause, of the Raja's obtaining the princess.

The *Vinda*, which literally means a drop, is the unintentional development of some secondary incident, which furnishes a clue to the event—as when Ratnavali learns accidentally that she has beheld the person of the Raja Vatsa, she recollects she was designed by her father to be his bride, which after a due course of interruption she becomes.

Pataka, a banner, perhaps intended to signify embellishment, an episode.

Prakari, an episodical incident, or an event of limited duration and subordinate importance in which the principal characters bear no part.

Karya, is the end, or object, which being effected, the whole is effected, as the marriage of Vatsa and Ratnavali.

The end or object of the business admits of five condition: Beginning, Promotion, Hope of Success, Removal of Obstacles, Completion.

The series or combinations of incidents, the *Sandhis*, by which an object is ultimately attained, are also five.

The *Mulka* is the opening or preparatory course of incidents, by which the train of events to be afterwards developed is first sprung. Thus in *Malati* and *Madhara*, the hero and heroine have been thrown in each other's way by seeming accident, but in fact by the devices of their friends; and this lays the foundation of their love, and the occurrences of the play.

The *Pratimulka* is the metabasis, or secondary event, calculated to obstruct or promote the catastrophe, as the suspicion entertained by the queen, Vasavadatta, of her husband's love for Sagarika.

The *Garbha* is the covert prosecution of purpose, giving way in appearance to impediments, but in reality adhering to the original intention.

Vimarsha is the peripeteia, in which an effect is produced contrary to its intended cause, or change in the course of the story, by which expectation is baffled, and an unforeseen reverse ensues. *Sakuntala*, by her marriage with *Dushyanta*, has attained the summit of her desires, when she incurs the displeasure of *Durvasas*, and is in consequence separated from the recollection of her lord.

The *Upavishiti* or *Nirvahana*, is the catastrophe, or that to which all tends and in which all terminates.

This course assigned for the fable will be perhaps more intelligible if we apply the divisions to a drama of our own. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the ball at the house of Capulet may be considered the *Makha*; the *Pratimukha* is the interview with Juliet in the garden; the *Garbha* is Juliet's apparent assent to the marriage with Paris; the *Vimarsha* is the despair of Romeo, consequent on a contrivance intended to preserve Juliet's faith. The catastrophe needs no elucidation.

Each of these divisions in the Hindu system comprehends a number of subdivisions, *Angas*, or members, to follow the description of which would be to exhaust any patience except Hindu. It will be therefore sufficient to observe, that they comprehend a variety of dramatic incidents, which the theatre of every nation abundantly presents, and which, in fact, have no limits but imagination and dramatic effect. The Hindus enumerate sixty-four; or twelve *Mukhangas*, twelve *Pratimukhangas*, thirteen *Garbhangas*, thirteen *Vimarshangas*, and fourteen *Nirvahangas*. We may cite one of each as an example.

Yuktis is a *Mukhang* - it means the connexion of purpose and result. *Yogandharayana* has introduced *Sugrisha* to the queen, merely to put her in the way of the *Raja*, that he may see and love her. The business of the piece is founded on the result. We might say that the wager of *Iachimo* and *Posthumus*, and the visit of the *formor* to the court of *Cymbeline*, was an illustration of this element.

Parisarpa, is a *Pratimukhang*, implies the progressive narration of events. The Chamberlain relates in the *Feni-Sanhara* the death of *Bhishma* and destruction of the *Kauravas* by *Krishna*, as consequent upon the death of the son of the latter, *Aniruddha*. The description of the successive encounters of *Macbeth* and *Banquo* with the King of Norway and rebellious Thanes, by the bleeding soldier, is an instance of this variety.

Of the *Garbhangas*, *Abhrtaharana*, may be understood to signify misprision of loss or evil. Thus when in the *Feni*

Sankara, the messenger proclaims that Aswatthaman has been slain by Krishn, it is supposed that the prince has fallen, but it turns out that the death of an elephant so named is intended. Thus Juliet first interprets the nurse's grief for Tybalt's death as occasioned by the death of Romeo.

One of the *Umarshangas* is *Dyuti*, provoking to combat, as in the scene between Arjuna and Bhima, in the *Uma-Sinhara*. Examples of this are common enough in every drama. The scene between Dobrax and Sebastian in *Doctor Sebastian*, and that between Stukely and Lewson in the *Gameteer*, are amongst the most powerful in the English language.

One of the members of the catastrophe is *Graham*, referring to a purpose held in view throughout. Thus Bhima reminds Drupadi that she had been forbidden by him to tie up her dishevelled hair, as he had vowed to do it for her, when he had slain those who had subjected her to the indignity of untying the fillet which had bound it. The avowal made by Zanga in the concluding scene of *The Revenger*, of the feeling by which he has been animated to destroy Alonzo, may be held to be illustrative of this variety.

We shall not pursue these technicalities any further. It is clear from what has been stated, that considerable artifice must have been employed by the Hindu dramatists, in the construction of their fable, to authorise such a complicated subdivision of its details.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

Every description of composition has its appropriate hero and heroine, and in the ample range of the Hindu drama every class of society contributes its members to support these personages. The hero may be a god or demigod, or a mortal in the bigger kinds of composition he is drawn, in the latter case, from mythology, history, or fable or is the creation of the author. As love enters largely into the business of the Hindu theatre, the attributes of the hero are defined with reference to his fitness for feeling and inspiring passion and he is to be represented young, handsome, graceful, liberal, valiant, amiable, accomplished and well born. The chief technical classification of the *Avayali*, or hero, is into *Takta*, gay, thoughtless, and good humoured

Santa, gentle and virtuous, *Dhroodatta* high spirited, but temperate and firm, *Udatta*, ardent and ambitious. These are again subdivided, so as to make forty eight species, and by considering them as diversified by mortal, semi divine, or celestial origin, are multiplied to a hundred and forty four kinds. It must be rather difficult for a writer to observe, amidst such a multiplicity, the rule laid down for his delineation of the manners of his hero for whatever individual he adopts, he must take care to make him consistent with himself, and not to give him qualities incompatible with his organisation. Thus it is said that it is incongruous to ascribe liberality to the demon Ravana, to unite piety and pride in the son of Jamadagni, and to accuse the high minded Rama of compassing the death of Bali by fraud. These blemishes, when they occur in the original legend, should be kept out of view by the dramatist. Some allowance however, is made for "lover's perjuries" and a prince and hero may compromise his credit for dignity and veracity, in concealing from a jealous bride his *egaremens de cœur*.

Equal minuteness has been displayed in specifying the classes of *Nayikas* or heroines, and the extent to which females are partakers of scenic incident, affords an interesting picture of the relations of that sex in Hindu society. In the *Nalakas* and *Natikas* we have the nymphs of heaven, the brides of demigods, the wives of saints, and female saints themselves, and the deified woods and rivers, in the plays of pure fiction, we have princesses and courtesans, and in the pieces of intrigue, the different inmates of the harem. The first class of females is the legitimate creation of poetry and mythology, the others are portraits from social life. The introduction of the unmarried female of high birth into the lighter scenes of common life, is an accession to which ancient comedy was a stranger. The unmarried girl of family is never introduced in person in the scenes of Plautus and Terence. In *Malat*, and *Madhara*, we have Malati and her friend Madayantika, and in the *Ratnavaali*, Sagarika and the other damsels of the interior of the palace. It may be suspected, however that the former piece presents a purer specimen of Hindu manners than the latter. It seems probable that the princes of India learnt the practice of the rigid exclusion of women in their harems from the Mohammedans, and that previously, although they were subject to many restrictions, they were allowed to go freely into public on public occasions they were present at dramatic performances, they formed the chief part at bridal processions, they were permitted to visit the temples of the gods, and to perform their ablutions with little or no privacy in sacred streams, which last-named privileges they still retain, and

to which Mohammedan women have no similar right. Even in later times, the presence of men other than a husband or a son, was far from prohibited in the inner apartments, and in the *Ratnavali* the minister of Vasta, with his chamberlain and the envoy from Ceylon, are admitted to the audience of the Raja in the presence of the queen and her attending damsels. In what may be considered heroic times, queens and princesses seem to have travelled about where and how they pleased, and in the *Uttar Rama Charita*, Sita is sent to live by herself in the forests, and the mother of Rama comes with little or no parade to the hermitage of Valmiki.

Although, however, the social restraints to which females were subjected, under the ancient Hindu system, were of a very different nature from those which Mohammedanism imposes, and were in all probability even less severe than those which prevailed in many of the Greek states, they did no doubt operate to such an extent as to preclude women from taking any part in general society. This was more particularly the case with unmarried women, and we learn from several of the dramas, that it was a part of virtuous breeding for a virgin to decline conversation with a man even with a lover. Thus Sagarika in the *Ratnavali* and Malati in *Malati* and *Madhara*, can with difficulty be prevailed upon to address the objects of their affection. They answer to every question by proxy, and do not even trust their voices to their female companion above a whisper, when those they adore are present. Unmarried women, therefore, we may infer, might be in company with men and might hear their addresses, but would have violated decent if they had ventured to reply. No restraint of the nature was imposed upon married women. Suktitala appears in the public court of Dushyanta and pleads her own cause, and Vasavadatta, in the *Ratnavali*, enters unreservedly into communication with her father's envoy. The married ladies of the lighter pieces, indeed, exercise their wit upon their husband's particular confidant and friend, the Vidushaki, and the queen of Agni-intra and her foster sister Mekhala, indulge themselves in practical jokes at Charayana's expense.

The want of opportunity thus afforded to Hindu youth to appreciate the characters and dispositions of those to whom they were affinced, might be supposed to have subjected them to subsequent disgust and disappointment at home, and consequently compelled them to seek the gratification derived from female society elsewhere. Such has been the reason assigned for a similar practice amongst the Greeks. It may be doubted, however, whether this want of previous acquaintance was in any way the cause of the effect ascribed to it, for the practice was very universal and

disappointment could not have universally occurred. In all probability, it occurred less often than it does in European society, in which so much pains are taken to embellish a talent, and in which conventional good breeding conceals defects. The practice rather originated in what was considered to be the perfection of female virtue. "She was the best of women of whom little could be said, either in the way of good or harm : she was educated to see as little, to hear as little, and inquire as little as possible, and the chief purposes of her married life were to perpetuate her race, and regulate the company of the household." Her maximum of merit consisted on the assiduity with which she nursed her children and controlled her servants, and whilst thus devoted "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer," she might be a very useful, but certainly could not be a very entertaining com-

great dexterity, and the interest with which he has invested his "heroine" preveots manners so revolting to our notions from being obtrusively offensive. No art was necessary, in the estimation of a Hindu writer, to provide his hero with a wife or two, more or less, and the acquisition of an additional bride is the ordinary catastrophe of the lighter dramas.

Women are distinguished as being *Swaliya*, *Parakiya* and *Samanya*—or the wife of an individual himself, the wife or daughter of another person, and one who is independent. Each of these is distinguished as *Mugdha*, *Praudha*, and *Pragalbha* or youthful, adolescent, and mature; and of each of these, again, there are any varieties, which it is needless to specify. We may observe, however, to the honour of the Hindu drama, that the *Parakiya*, or she who is the wife of another person, is never to be made the object of a dramatic intrigue a prohibition that would have sullen cooled the imagination and curbed the wit of Dryden and Congreve.

The incidental characters or conditions of a *Nayika* are declared to be eight

1. The *Scadhinayatika* is devoted to her husband.
2. The *Vasakasajja* is a damsels full dressed in expectation of her lover.
3. *Firahotkantika* mourns the absence of her lord.
4. The *Khandita* is mortified by detecting a lover's infidelity.
5. The *Kalahantarita* is overcome with grief or anger at real or fancied neglect.
6. The *Vipralabha* is disappointed by her lover's failing his appointment.
7. The *Proshitabhrutika* is a female whose husband or lover is in a foreign country.
8. The *Abhisarika* is a female who goes to meet her lover, or sends to seek him.

The *Alankaras*, the ornaments or graces of women, and with which the *Nayika* should be delineated by the dramatic or poetic writer, are said to be twenty. Many of these are palpable enough; such as *Sobha*, brilliancy or beauty, and youth; *Madhurya*, sweetness of disposition; *Dhairyta*, steady attachment &c. But there are some which, as characteristic of the Hindu system, may perhaps merit specification. *Bhara* is a slight personal indication of natural emotion. *Hara* is its stronger expression, as change of colour; and *Hela* is the decided manifestation of feeling. *Lila* is mimicry of a lover's manner, language, dress &c., for his diversion, or that of female companions. *Vilasa* is the expression of desire evinced in look, act, or speech. *Vichekhitti* is neglect of dress and ornaments through mental agitation. *Vikrama* is the wrong application of personal embellishments occasioned by

hurry and anxiety. *KilaKinchita* is mixed sensation, as the conflict between joy and grief, tenderness and resentment. *Mottayita* is the silent expression of returned affection. *Kut-tamita* is the affected repulse of a lover's endearments. *Vikrita* is the suppression of the sentiments of the heart through bashfulness; and *Lalita* is the conviction of triumphant charms, and the sentiment of gratified love, is expressed by elegance of attire and complacency of deportment.

The *dramatis Personae*, with the exception of the hero and heroine, form the *anga* or the body of the characters. Of these the following are distinguished

The *Pithamarda* is the friend and confidant of the hero, and sometimes the hero of a secondary action interwoven with the principal. Such is the case in the *Malati* and *Madhara*, in which the love of Nakarand for Madayantika proceeds parallel with that of Madhava for Malati.

Another person of primary rank is the *Pratinayaka*, the counterpart and antagonist of the hero. Such is Ravana as opposed to Rama, and Duryodhana to Yudhishthira.

Each of these may have his courtiers, ministers, officers, companions and dependants; but there are two individuals, termed specifically the *Vila* and the *Vidushaka*, that are peculiar in some degree to the theatre of the Hindus.

The character of the *Vila* is not very easily understood. It is necessary that he should be accomplished in the lighter arts, particularly poetry, music, and singing, and he appears indiscriminately as the companion of a man or woman, although in the latter case, the female is the courtesan. He is generally represented on familiar and easy, and yet dependent, terms with his associate, and evinces something of the char-

ference. In the *Mrichchhakatī* he is further distinguished by his mirth and his devotion to his friend. This character is always lively, and sometimes almost witty, although in general his facetiousness does not take a very lofty flight. According to the technical definition of his attributes, he is to excite mirth by being ridiculous in person, age and attire.

The *Nayika*, or heroine, has always her companion and confidante and the most appropriate personage to fill this capacity is a foster sister. Where queens are the heroines a favourite damsel discharges this duty. Female devotees play a leading part in several dramas as well as novels, and in that case are usually described as of the Baudhā sect. In the *Vrikhal-Katha* these pious ladies are usually painted in very unfavourable colours, but in *Malati* and *Madhara*, the old priestess, or rather ascetic, is represented as a woman of profound learning and sound morals, the instructress and friend of men who held the highest offices in the state, and the instrument selected by them to secure the happiness of their children.

The subordinate characters of both sexes are derived from every class of society, and even the *Chandalas* find a place in the comedies of fiction. A strange enumeration is given of the male characters admissible as tenants of the interior of palaces, or Funuchs, Mutes, Dwarfs, Foresters and Barbarians. The attendance of females on the persons of kings is another national peculiarity, especially as it appears from the *Malra-Rakshasa*, that this practice was not confined to the inner apartments; for Chandragupta, although he does not appear in public so attended, goes thus accompanied from one place to another.

the *Bhavas*, conditions of the mind or body, which are followed by a corresponding expression in those who feel, or are supposed to feel them, and a corresponding impression on those who behold them. When these conditions are of a permanent or perdurable description, and produce a lasting and general impression, which is not disturbed by the influence of collateral or contrary excitements, they are, in fact, the same with the impressions : as desire or love, as the main object of the action is both the condition of the chief character and the sentiment with which the spectator is filled. When the conditions are incidental and transitory, they contribute to the general impression, but are not confounded with it. They may, indeed, be contrary to it in their essence, without weakening or counteracting it ; as a hero may, for public reason, abandon his mistress without foregoing his love, and may perform acts of horror even in furtherance of his passion.

The *Bhavas* are therefore divided into *Sthayin* or lasting, *Vyabhicharin*, transitory or incidental. There are also other divisions, which we shall proceed to notice.

The *Sthayi-Bhavas*, or permanent conditions, are, according to some authorities, eight ; according to others, nine.

1. *Rati* is desire for any object, arising from seeing or hearing it, or having it present to the recollection.

2. *Hasa* is laughter or mirth, distinct from the laughter of scorn.

3. *Soka* is sorrow at separation from a beloved object.

4. *Krodha* is the resentment of injurious treatment.

5. *Utsaha* is high-mindedness, or that feeling which prompts valour, munificence, or mercy.

6. *Bhaya* is the fear of reproach.

7. *Jugupsa* is aversion or disgust; the emotion which attends seeing, touching or hearing of anything offensive.

8. *Vismaya* is the emotion produced by seeing, touching, or hearing of anything surprising.

9. *Santa* is not always included in this enumeration: it implies that state of mind which contemplates all human events as transitory and insignificant.

Before advertiring to the *Vyabhichari-Bhavas*, we must notice the other divisions, as they are essential accompaniments of both of them and the *Sthayi-Bhavas*. The *Bhavas* are distinguished as *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas*, and *Sattwika-Bhavas*.

The *Vibhavas* are the preliminary and accompanying conditions which lead to any particular state of mind or body and the *Anubhavas* are the external signs which indicate its existence.

The *Sattwika-Bhavas* are the involuntary expressions of emotion natural to a living being—as *Stambha*, paralysis:

ul recollection; *Anubhavas*, giddiness, falling on the ground, insensibility.

Example—"I know not whether this be pain or pleasure that I feel, whether I wake or sleep, whether wine or venom spread through my frame; thy touch has confounded all my faculties, and now I shake with cold, and now I burn with inward heat" (*Dasa-Rupaka*, from 'the *Uttara Rama-Charita*).

11. *Smriti*, recollection; *Vibhavas*, the effort to remember, association of ideas; *Anubhavas*, contracting or drawing up the eyebrows, &c.

Example—"Is this Mainaka that stops my way through the air? Whence is this audacity? Has he forgotten how he shrank from the thunderbolt of Indra?—Is it Tarkshya that thus presumes, who ought to know me, Ravana, the equal of his lord?—No, it is Jatayu—oppressed by years, he comes to court his death." (*Dasa-Rupaka*, from the *Hanuman-Nataka*)

12. *Dhriti*, concentration or repose of the mind, fortitude or content; *Vibhavas*, knowledge, power; *Anubhavas*, calm enjoyment, patient suffering.

Example—"We are contented here with the bark of trees; you are happy in affluence: our satisfaction is equal, there is no difference in our conditions. He alone is poor whose desires are insatiable; but when the mind is satisfied, who can be called poor, who can be termed rich?" (*Dasa-Rupaka*, from the *Satakas of Bhartrihari*.)

13. *Vrida*, shame, shrinking from praise or censure; *Vibhavas*, conscious impropriety, disgrace, defeat; *Anubhavas*, casting down the eyes, hanging down the head, covering the face, blushing.

Example—"The eyes of Arjuna, suffused with starting tears, are fixed in sad dejection upon his bow; inflamed with rage, he mourns the death of Abhimanyu, slain by an unworthy enemy, but burns still more with shame to think it yet unreenged! 'Alas, alas, my son!' are words that are swelling in his throat, but not suffered to find their way." (*Sarawati-antahkarana*, from the *Venu-Sankara*.)

14. *Chapalata*, unsteadiness, haste, repeatedly changing from one thing to another; *Vibhavas*, envy, hatred, passion, joy; *Anubhavas*, angry looks, abuse, blows, following one's own inclination.

Example—"When he heard that Rama had taken up his bow, and announced with delight his expectation of the coming contest, after he had thrown a bridge over the sea and advanced to Lanka, the many hands of Ravana dropped their snuffs, as might be inferred from the rattling of the bracelets, which had been almost burst with exultation at

the commencement of the war." (*Rasa-Tarangini*, from the *Hanuman-Nataka*) "

15. *Harsha*, joy, mental exultation; *Vibhavas*, meeting with a lover or friend, the birth of a son, &c.; *Anubhavas*, horripilation, perspiration, tears, sobbing, change of voice.

Example.—"The matron to whose arms her lord returns in safety from the dangers of a journey over desert lands, wipes from her eyes the starting tear of joy as she thinks of the perils of the way. She brushes with her mantle from the faithful camel's toaded hair the heavy sand, and fills his mouth with handfuls of his favourite fodder." (*Dasa Rupaka*.)

16. *Avega*, agitation or flurry, arising from unexpected or unpleasant events; *Vibhavas*, the approach of a friend or enemy, the occurrence of natural phenomena, and the proximity of imminent danger; *Anubhavas*, slipping, falling, tumbling, haste, inability to move, &c.

Example.—"Haste, haste, my arms!—Quick!—Caparison my steed!—Where is my sword? Bring me my dagger! Where is my bow, and where my mail? Such were the cries that echoed through the mountain caves, when, startled from their slumbers by the dream that thou hadst shown them, the enemy awoke in alarm." (*Dasa Rupaka*, from a play or poem of the author's own, which he has not named.)

17. *Jadata*, loss of faculty or activity, incapacity for every kind of business; *Vibhavas*, seeing, hearing, or encountering anything agreeable or disagreeable in excess; *Anubhavas*, silence, fixed look, apathetic indifference.

Example.—"1st *Rakshasa*. By whom have those mighty demons been slain, by Trisiras, Khara, and Dushana commanded?"

"2d *Rakshasa*. By the ferocious warrior Rama

"1st. *Rakshasa*. By him alone?

"2d *Rakshasa*. Who could believe it that did not see it?

Amidst the din of battle, the numbers of our host were strewed headless corpses on the plain, and plunging herons burrowed in the hollow of each severed neck.

"1st *Rakshasa*. If he be such as you describe, what can such as I attempt?" (*Dasa-Rupaka*, from the *Udatta Raghava*)

Example.—"When the monkey chiefs heard from Hanumat, upon his return, that they would be unable to cross the expanded bed of the ocean, they laughed at his report; but when they reached the shore, and first beheld the vast and ever tossing main, they stood to gaze upon it like figures in a picture." (*Rasa Tarangini*, from the *Hanuman-Nataka*)

18. *Garba*, arrogance, holding one's self superior to all men; *Vibhavas*, opinion of family, beauty, rank, and strength; *Anubhavas*, disrespect, frowns, freedoms, laughter, acts of prowess.

Example—"Whilst I bear arms, what need of others' swords that which cannot be accomplished by my falchion must be impossible for all" (*Saraswatisanthabharana* from the *Mahabharata*)

19 *Vishada*, despair of success, anticipation of misfortune; *Vibhavas*, failure in acquiring wealth, fame, or offspring, and their loss, *Anubhavas*, sighing, palpitation, abstraction, anxious search for friends or patrons, &c.

Example—"Taraka, what is this? Gourds sink in the stream, and stones are buoyant. The glory of the mighty monarch of the Rakshasas is effaced, and the child of a mortal triumphs. I have lived to see my kinsmen slain, the feebleness of age forbids the discharge of my functions. What now is to be done?" (*Dasa Rupaka*, from the *Vira Charitra*)

20 *Autsukja*, impatience; *Vibhava*, expectation of a lover, *Anubhavas*, uneasiness, lassitude, sighs.

Example—"The first watch is spent in agreeable diversions; the second, in weaving a wreath of lotus flowers, *champakas*, *ketakas*, *jasmines*, the third, in adjusting the golden bracelet, and chain, and ear rings, and zone. But how pretty damsel, is the last watch of the day to be passed?" (*Rasa Tarangini*)

21. *Nidra* drowsiness, contraction of the mental faculties, or recession of their properties from the organs of sense, *Vibhavas*, fatigue of body or mind, *Anubhavas*, relaxation of the muscles, twinkling of the eyes, yawning, dosing

Example—"Still echo in my heart those gentle love inspiring words my fawn eyed maid breathed to-day, half indistinct and half articulate, when her eyes twinkled with drowsiness" (*Dasa Rupaka*)

22. *Apasniara*, possession, demoniac or planetary influence, *Vibhavas*, impurity, solitude, excessive fear or grief, &c., *Anubhavas*, trembling, sighing, foaming, lolling out the tongue, falling on the ground in convulsions

Example—"When he beheld the Lord of Waters, furious and foaming, clinging to the earth and tossing high his mighty waves like arms, he thought him one possessed" (*Dasa Rupaka*, from *Magha*)

23 *Supta*, sleep, *Vibhava*, sleepiness, *Anubhavas*, closing of the eyes, immobility, and hard breathing

Example—"As the eyes of the foe of Mura close, and the breath plays upon his quivering lip, in the bowers on the Yamuna's bank, one smiling damsel steals away his robe, another the gem from his ear, and a third the golden bracelets from his arms" (*Rasa Tarangini*)

24 *Vibodha*, the unfolding of the faculties, waking, *Vibhava*, dissipation of drowsiness, *Anubhavas*, rubbing the eyes, snapping the fingers, shaking the limbs

Example—"May the glances of Hari preserve you, when he extends his dripping limbs, designing to quit his discus, pillow, and serpent couch amidst the ocean, and averts his half-opening eyes, red with long slumber, from the blaze of the lamps, set with gems." (*Saraswatikanthabharana*, from the *Mudra-Rakshasa*.)

25. *Amarsha*, impatience of opposition or rivalry ; *Vibhavas*, discomfiture, disgrace ; *Anubhavas*, perspiration, redness of the eyes, shaking of the head, abusive language, blows.

Example.—"Shall the sons of Dhritarashtra go unpunished, and I survive ? They have set fire to our dwelling, offered us poison for food, assumed our state, seized upon our wealth, and sought our lives, and have laid violent hands upon the robe and tresses of our common bride." (*Saraswatikanthabharana*, from the *Veni-Sanvara*.)

26. *Avahittha*, disguise, attempted concealment of sentiments by personal acts; *Vibhavas*, modesty, turpitude, importance ; *Anubhavas*, acting, looking and speaking in a manner foreign to the real object.

Example.—"Whilst thus the divine sage spoke, the beautiful Parvati, standing by his side, held down her head with shame, and pretended to count the leaves of the lotus in her hand." (*Dasa-Rupaka*, from the *Kumara Sambhava*.)

27. *Ugrata*, sternness, cruelty ; *Vibhavas*, promulgation of taunt or crime, theft, evil disposition ; *Anubhavas*, reviling, abusing, and beating.

Example.—"Is not my unrelenting spirit known to all the world ? One and twenty times did I destroy the martial race, and hewed to pieces the very infants in the womb; nor desisted till I had allayed the fires of a father's wrath, by ablution in the reservoir of blood which I had promised to his ghost." (*Dasa Rupaka*, from the *Vira-Charitra*.)

28. *Mati*, apprehension, mental conclusion; *Vibhava*, study of the *Sastras*; *Anubhavas*, shaking the head, drawing up the brows, giving instruction or advice.

Example.—"Assuredly she is fit to be a Kshattriya's wife for my mind feels her worthy of my love. The dictates of the soul are in all doubtful points the authority of the virtuous." (*Saraswatikanthabharana*, from *Saluntala*.)

29. *Vyadhi*, sickness; *Vibhavas*, vitiation of the humours, effect of heat or cold, influence of the passions; *Anubhavas*, appropriate bodily symptoms.

Example.—"Her kindred are in fears, her parents in sorrowful abstraction, her friends are overcome with melancholy, her associates with affliction: the hope to her that to day or tomorrow her sufferings will cease is despair to others, but she participates not in the pain of separation from the world." (*Dasa-Rupaka*)

30. *Unmada*, absence of reflection or restraint : *Vibhavas*, loss of a beloved or desired object, reverse of fortune, morbid action or possession ; *Anubhavas*, talking incoherently, laughing, weeping, or singing without cause.

Example.—"Vile Rakshasa, forbear ; whether wouldest thou bear my beloved ! Alas ! it is no demon, but a cloud. It is the bow of Indra, not the weapon of a distant foe, the rain-drops beat upon me, not hostile shafts; and that gleam of golden radiance is the lightning, not my love." (*Dasa Rupaka*, from *Vikrama and Urvashi*.)

31. *Marana*, death; *Vibhavas* expiration, wounds, injuries; *Anubhavas*, falling on the ground, immobility.

Example.—"The female fiend, pierced through the heart by the resistless shafts of the blooming Rama, poured through the nostrils a torrent of blood, and sought the dwelling of the lord of life." (*Sahitya-Darpana*, from the *Raghu-Vamisa*)

32. *Trasa*, fear without cause; *Vibhavas*, hearing frightful sounds, seeing alarming objects; *Anubhavas*, immobility trembling, perspiration, relaxed muscles.

Example.—"As the fish played about their knees, the nymphs of heaven, their glances wild with terror and striking their hands together, looked upon each other fearfully." (*Saraswatikanthabharana*, from the *Kirata*)

33. ⁴ *Vitarka*, consideration; discussion : *Vibhava*, the perception of doubtful circumstances; *Anubhavas*, shaking the head, raising the eyebrows, &c.

Example.—"Has this been contrived by Bharata misled by ambition, or has the second queen effected it through female levity ? Both these notions must be incorrect. The prince is the heir's youngest brother the queen, his parent and his father's wife. It is clear, therefore, that this unhappy event is the work of destiny." (*Dasa-Rupaka*.)

This concludes the list of *Vyabhichari-Bhavas*, or incidental conditions, according to the best treatises on this subject; and as they assert, to the elementary rules of Bharata, in which they are enumerated. They are in many cases subtilised and subdivided in a manner which it is unnecessary here to notice. Their judicious delineation gives to poetic and dramatic composition its flavour or taste.

The *Rasas*, it is expressly stated, are so termed, from the analogy between mental and physical impressions. The conception of love or hatred, as derived from a drama, is fitly compared to the notion which such substances as may be sweet or saline convey of saltiness or sweetness. The idea is not peculiar to Hindu literature; and the most polished nations of Europe agree in the employment of a term of similar, literal and metaphorical import, as *taste gusto*, *gout*, *geschmack*. A similar application of terms is traceable in Latin and Greek

and, as Addison observes, "this metaphor would not have been so general, had there not been a conformity between the mental taste and that sensitive taste which gives us a relish of every savour."

The *Rasas* reside in the composition, but are made sensible by their action on the reader or spectator. In the first case, they may be identified with the permanent conditions or *Bhavas*. It is more usual, however, to regard them as distinct—as the effects of the *Bhavas* and not of one nature with them. Their due appreciation depends upon the sensitiveness of the critic; but a spectator, who deserves the name, is defined by Bharata to be "one who is happy when the course of the drama is cheerful, melancholy when it is sorrowful, who rages when it is furious, and trembles when it is fearful," or, in a word, who sympathises with what he sees.

The *Rasas* are eight, according to Bharata; according to some authorities there are nine. They are *Sringara*, love; *Hasya*, mirth, *Karuna*, tenderness; *Raudra*, fury; *Vira* heroism; *Bhayanaka*, terror; *Bibhatsa*, disgust; and *Adbhuta*, wonder—the ninth is *Santa*, or tranquillity. The serious part of this list is much more comprehensive than the Greek tragic *Rasas* of terror and pity; but, as anticipated by the Hindu critics, the whole might be easily extended. In reply to this, however, they say, that all other impressions may be classed under some of these, as paternal fondness comes under the head of tenderness, and avarice is an object of mirth; and the same argument may be urged in favour of the limitations of Aristotle. The fewer the classes, however, the more subtle is the ingenuity required to squeeze all the species into them, and so far the Hindu theory has an advantage over the Greek.

Sringara, or love, is a very leading principle in the drama of the Hindus: it is not, however, an indispensable ingredient, and many plays are wholly exempt from any trace of it. The love of the Hindus is less sensual than that of the Greek and Latin comedy, and less melaphysical than that of French and English tragedy: The loose gallantry of modern comedy is unknown to the Hindus, and they are equally strangers to the professed adoration of chivalric poetry: but their passion is neither tame nor undignified. It is sufficiently impassioned to be exempt from frigidity, and it is too tender to degrade the object of the passion; whilst, at the same time, the place that woman holds in society is too rationally defined for her to assume an influence foreign to her nature; and the estimation in which human life is held, is to humble, for a writer to elevate any mortal to the honours of a divinity. The condition of lovers is described as

threefold they may be in possession of each other's affections, and personally united, their passion may not have been mutually communicated, and their union not have taken place, and they may have been united and subsequently separated from each other. The first is called *Sambhoga*, the second *Ayoga*, and the third *Viprayoga* or these kinds are reduced to two, and *Sambhoga* expresses successful, and *Vipralambha* unsuccessful love. The causes and consequences and modifications of these conditions are the subjects of much subtle definition, which it is not necessary to prosecute. Abundant illustration of the manner in which the passion is treated will be found in the following pages.

Vira is the *Rasa* of heroism, and heroic magnanimity is evinced in three ways, munificence, clemency, and valour. Where the latter is displayed, it must be calm, collected, and dispassionate, any indication of violence belongs to a different taste. The *Vira Charitra* affords an example of this *Rasa*, and the calm intrepidity of its hero presents a very favourable contrast to the fury of a Tydides, or the arrogance of a Rinaldo.

Bibhatsa is the feeling of disgust inspired by filthy objects, or by fetid odours, or by low and virulent abuse. It is not the subject, it is believed, of any entire drama, but many scenes of this description occur, as the resort of Madhava to the place of cremation, and the dialogue of the two demons in the *Venu Samhara*.

Raudra is the sentiment of furious passion, expressed by violent gesticulation, threatening language, and acts of personal aggression. Examples of it occur only in detached characters, as in *Parasurama*, *Ravana* and *Durjodhana*.

Hasya is mirth arising from ridicule of person, speech, or dress, either one's own or another's, and engenders laughter of various intensity. A *Smita*, which is only the expansion of the eyelids, *Hasita* displays the teeth, *Vihasita* is characterised by a gentle exclamation, *Upahasita* exhibits tears, in *Apahasita* the tears flow in excess, and *Atihasita* is "laughing holding both his sides." The two first kinds of merriment are the gentlest, the two next are rather vulgar, but pardonable; the two last are absolutely low, or "the vulgar way the vulgar show their mirth."

The *Abhuta Rasa* is the expression of the marvellous. Wonder is the prevailing characteristic produced by uncommon objects, and indicated by exclamation, trembling, and perspiration &c.

The *Bhayanaka* is the taste of terror; it is induced by awful occurrences, and exhibited by trembling, perspiration, dryness of mouth, and indistinctness of judgment.

Karuna is pity or tenderness excited by the occurrence

of misfortunes; it is inspired by sighs and fears, mental unconsciousness or aberration, and is suitably illustrated by the delineation of depression, exhaustion, agony, and death.

The *Santa Rasa* is very consistently excluded from dramatic composition, although it is allowed a place in moral or didactic poetry. It implies perfect quiescence, or exemption from mental excitement, and is therefore uncongenial to the drama, the object of which is to paint and inspire passion. The advocates for its exclusion suggest a compromise and transfer it from the persons of the play to the audience, who are thus fitted for the impressions to be made upon them. It is highly proper, it is urged, that they should exhibit the *Santa Rasa*, and sit in silent attention, their tempers perfectly passive and their hearts free from every external influence.

Conformably to the genius of mythological classification, the *Rasas* are by some authorities considered to be personified of various hues, and subject to the influence of different divinities, as follows:

<i>Sringara</i>,	....	black, subject to Vishnu
<i>Hasja</i>,	....	white, Rama
<i>Raudra</i>,	.....	red, Rudra
<i>Vira</i>,	....	red, Sakra
<i>Karuna</i>,	....	gray, Varuna
<i>Bhayanaka</i>,	....	black, Yama
<i>Bibhatsa</i>,	....	blue, . . . Mahakala
<i>Abhuta</i>,	....	yellow, . . . Brahma.

The arrangement appears, however, to be modern, and little recognised.

The combination of the *Rasas* with each other, their modifications, and the manner in which they are affected by the intermixture of the different *Bhavas*, furnish the Hindu writers on the subject with ample opportunity to indulge their passion for infinite minutiae. It may be observed, however, that this rage for subtle subdivision is most remarkable in writers of recent date, and the oldest works, as the *Dasa Rupaka* for instance, are contented with a moderate multiplication of definitions. As to the dramatic writers themselves, they might possibly have been influenced in some degree by theoretical principles, and in the example of one of the most celebrated, *Bhavabhuti*, we have his three pieces severally appropriated, like Miss Baillie's plays, of the Passions, to distinct emotions *Malati* and *Madhava*, to the *Sringara Rasa*, or love; the *Vira Charitra* to heroism, or the *Vira Rasa*, and the *Uttara Rama Charitra* to the *Karuna Rasa*, or tenderness. We have no reason to think, however, that he or any of the elder writers troubled themselves about trifles, or knew or regarded the multiplied laws which have been derived from their

practice. It is not so much to illustrate the plays themselves that the foregoing picture of the system founded on them has been sketched, as to afford a view of the theatrical criticism of the Hindus, and a notion of their mode of theorising. We cannot now question that they had a theory, which has been elaborated with great diligence, if not with much success, and which, although it comprises many puerilities, is not wholly a stranger to just principles or refined taste.

As connected with the *Rasas*, we may notice one more division, which is less liable than the preceding to the charge of unnecessary trifling, it rather affects the construction than the objects of the drama, but as part of the means by which its purposes are effected, may not be inconveniently noticed here. According to Bharata's aphorisms, there are four *Vrittis*, which may be rendered Styles of Dramatic Representation, implying the general character of the dialogue and incidents, and which are severally appropriate to different *Rasas* or passions. They are termed *Kausiki*, *Sattwata*, *Arabhati* and *Bharati*. The three first are suited respectively to the *Sringara*, *Vira* and *Raudra Rasas*: the last is common to all. The three first chiefly concern the incidents and situations: the latter regards the dialogue, and signifies merely appropriate and elegant language. The discovery of a lady's love, by her having painted a picture of her lover, which she vainly endeavours to conceal from a friend, is an incident in the *Kausiki*, or playful and pleasing style. Inspiring dread of treachery by fabricated documents or supposititious proofs belongs to the *Sattwata*, the grave and serious style; and combat, tumult, magic, and natural portents are occurrences in the style termed *Arabhati*, the awful and appalling.

CHAPTER V

THE LANGUAGE OF THE HINDU THEATRE

The language of the Hindu theatre offers many peculiarities, but they can scarcely be fully detailed without citing the original passages, and could only be duly appreciated by students of the Sanskrit language. It will be sufficient for our purpose, therefore, to advert to the principal characteristics.

According to the original aphorism of Bharata, "the poet is to employ choice and harmonious terms, and an elevated and polished style, embellished with the ornaments of rheto-

ric and rhythm" The injunction has not been disregarded, and in no department of Hindu literature are the powers of the Sanskrit language more lavishly developed in the late writers, the style is generally so painfully laboured as to be still more painfully read but in the oldest and best pieces, the composition, although highly finished is not in general of difficult apprehension. The language of Kalidasa is remarkably easy, so is that of Bhavabhuti, in the *Uttara Rama Charitra* in his other two plays, and especially in *Malati and Madhava* it is more elaborate and difficult. The *Mrichchhakati* presents fewer difficulties than any of the whole series. The *Mirari Nataka* is one of the most unintelligible.

The ordinary business dialogue of the Hindu drama is for the greater part in prose, but reflections or descriptions, and the poetical flights of the author, are in verse. Every one of the many kinds of Sanskrit metre is employed on the latter occasion, from the *Anushtubh* to the *Dandaka*, or verse of four lines of eight syllables each, so that which contains any number of syllables from twenty seven to one hundred and ninety nine. Bhavabhuti occasionally indulges in this last metre, Kalidasa seldom, if ever. His favourite form appears to be the *Arja* or *Gatha*, but none of the poets confine themselves to a particular description. The first thirty five stanzas of *Sakuntala* exhibit eleven kinds of metre, and in the scene quoted from *Malati and Madhava* by Colebrooke, in his *Essay on Sanskrit and Prakrit Prosody*, in the tenth volume of the *Asiatic Researches*, we have the like number, or eleven varieties, for the greater part of the most complex description. That this diversity of composition enhances the difficulty of understanding the Hindu plays may be admitted, but it likewise adds to the richness and melody of the composition. It is impossible to conceive language so beautifully musical, or so magnificently grand, as that of many of the verses of Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa.

Another peculiarity of the Hindu plays is their employing different forms of speech for different characters. This is not like the *Patois* of the French comedies, or the Scotch of English dramas, individual and occasional, but is general and invariable. The hero and the principal personages speak Sanskrit but women and the inferior characters use the various modifications of that language which are comprehended under the term *Prakrit*. As observed by Colebrooke, in regard to this mixture of languages, the Italian theatre presents instances in the prose comedies of Ruzzanti, and the coincidence is noticed by Walker, with reference to Sir William Jones's remarks prefixed to his translation of *Sakuntala*. But these five act farces, the notion of which was

probably borrowed from the *Paenulus* of Plautus, hold but an insignificant place in the dramatic literature of Italy, and the employment of the Venetian and Bergamask dialects by Goldoni is only like the use of those of Somersetshire or Yorkshire on the English stage, except that it is rather more prominent and frequent. In no theatre, however, have we a mixture of languages exactly analogous to that invariably in the drama of the Hindus.

"*Prakrit*," Sir William Jones observes (Preface to *Sakuntala*), "is little more than the language of the Brahmins melted down by a delicate articulation, to the softness of Italian" in which he is quite correct, as far as the *Prakrit* spoken by the heroine and principal female personages is concerned. Colebrooke, however, more correctly intimates, that the term *Prakrit* is of a more comprehensive nature, and is properly applicable to all the written and cultivated dialects of India. It may be doubted, however, if it is usually understood in this sense, and the term is applied in the *Prakrit* grammars to a variety of forms, which agree only in name with the spoken dialects. Thus the *Magadhi*, by which name may be considered that dialect which is more ordinarily understood by *Prakrit*, is very different from the vernacular language of Magadh or Behar. The *Sauraseni* is by no means the same with the dialect of Mathura and Vrindavan, and the *Maharashtri*, would be of little avail in communicating with the Maharratas, or people of Maharashtra. The other species enumerated are equally incapable of identification with the dialects to which they might be supposed to refer.

According to the technical authorities, the different dialects employed are these. The heroine and principal female characters speak *Sauraseni*, attendants on royal persons speak *Magadhi*, servants, Rajputs and traders *Arddha*—half or mixed *Magadhi*. The *Vidushaka* speaks the *Prachi*, or eastern dialect, rogues use *Avantika*, or the language of Ougem, and intriguers that of the Dekhan or Peninsula. The dialect of *Bahlka* is spoken by the people of the north, and *Dratida* by the people of the Coromandel coast. The individuals named *Sakas* and *Sakaris* speak dialects of their own, and cowherds, outcasts, and foresters, use their respective forms of speech. Even the imps of mischief have their appropriate jargon, and the *Pisachas* or goblins, when introduced on the stage, speak a dialect of *Prakrit* termed *Pisachī*.

If these directions were implicitly followed, a Hindu play would be a polyglot that few individuals could hope to understand. In practice, however, we have rarely more than three varieties, or *Sanskrit*, and a *Prakrit* more or less refined. In point of fact, indeed, there is little real difference in the several varieties of *Prakrit* they all agree in grammatical struc-

ture, and in the most important deviations from Sanskrit, and only vary in their orthoepy, the lower kinds employing the harshest letters and rudest combinations. The words are essentially the same in all, and all are essentially the same with Sanskrit the difference affecting the pronunciation and spelling rather than the radical structure, and tending generally to shorten the words, and substitute a soft for a hard, and a slurred for an emphatic articulation. Thus *lavana*, salt, becomes *lona*; *mayura*, a peacock, becomes *mora*; *madhuka*, a kind of tree, becomes *mathva*; *puruṣa*, a man, is *puriso*; *srigala*, a jackal, is *siala*; *yauvana*, youth, is *yovana*; and *bhavati* becomes *hodi*. Prakrit is also averse to some forms of conjunct consonants, and either changes them to a simple reduplication or omits one of them; as *nagna*, naked, becomes *nagga*; *vatsa*, a child, *bichchha*; and *chandra*, the moon, *chanda*. In the aspirated letters, the aspirate alone is usually retained, as *gahira*, for *gambhira* deep; *saha*, or *sabha*, an assembly. These will be sufficient to characterise the general nature of the changes by which Sanskrit becomes Prakrit, and which will sufficiently prove their identity. At the same time, in long and complicated sentences, the affinity is not always so obvious as it might be supposed, and the occurrence of Prakrit offers a difficulty in the perusal of Sanskrit plays which is not readily overcome without the aid of a commentary, in which the passages are always translated into Sanskrit. Prakrit admits of most of the prosody of Sanskrit, and a due proportion of it is always written in varied metre. Its grammatical construction is marked by some peculiarities, such as the want of a dual number and dative case, and the employment of but one conjugation. The lower species are especially characterised by a disregard of grammatical concords, and the use of a common termination for every modification of gender, number and persons.

There is one question of some interest attaching to the construction of the Prakrit, which merits a fuller inquiry than has been yet given to it, and on which this is not the place to dilate. Does it represent a dialect that was even spoken? or is it an artificial modification of the Sanskrit language, devised to adapt the latter to peculiar branches of literature? The latter seems to be the most likely; for there would be no difficulty in the present day in writing it, although it is no longer spoken, and highly finished specimens are to be found in plays which are modern productions. The *Vidagdha-Madhava*, for instance, consists more than half of high Prakrit, and it was written less than three centuries ago. On the other hand, many of the modifications are to be found in the spoken dialects of Hindustan, and the rules of Prakrit grammar account for changes which without such aid it is diffi-

cult to comprehend. The simplification of the grammatical construction, by the disuse of the dual number and the reduced number of verbal conjugations, looks also like the spontaneous substitution of practical to theoretic perfection in actual speech, and may tempt us to think the Prakrit was once a spoken tongue. The subject is interesting, not only in a philological, but in a historical view; for the sacred dialects of the Buddhists and the Jainas are nothing else than Prakrit, and the period and circumstances of its transfer to Ceylon and to Nepal are connected with the rise and progress of that religion which is professed by the principal nations to the north and east of Hindustan.

CHAPTER VI

SCENIC APPARATUS

The Hindus never had any building appropriated to public entertainments; they could not, therefore, have had any complicated system of scenery or properties. It appears from several of the dramas, that in the palaces of kings there was a chamber or hall known as the *Sangita-Sala*, the music saloon, in which dancing and singing were practised and sometimes exhibited; but there is no reference to any separate edifice for such purposes, open to the public, either gratuitously or at a charge, and such an institution would be foreign to the state of society in the East, which in many respects certainly was not advanced beyond that of the Middle Ages in Europe, when minstrels and mimes were universally strollers, and performed in the halls of baronial castles, or in booths at fairs. In England, even, there appears to have been no resident company of players, or permanent theatre, earlier than the reign of Elizabeth. Companies of actors in India must have been common at an early date, and must have been reputable, for the inductions often refer to the poets as their personal friends, and a poet of tolerable merit in India, under the ancient regime, was the friend and associate of sages and kings. The Hindu actors were never apparently classed with vagabonds or menials, and were never reduced to contemplate a badge of servitude as a mark of distinction. As to theatrical edifices, the manners of the people, and the nature of the climate, were adverse to their existence, and the spacious open courts of the dwellings of persons of consequence were equally adapted to the

purposes of dramatic representation and the convenience of the spectators. We should never forget, in speaking of the Hindu drama, that its exhibition, as has been noticed in the preface, was not an ordinary occurrence, or an amusement of the people, but that it was part of an occasional celebration of some solemn or religious festival.

The writers on dramatic systems furnish us with no information whatever on this part of our subject, with one exception, and, in the *Sangita-Ratnakara*, alone, have we any allusion to the place in which performances were held. The description there given, indeed, rather applies to a place for the exhibition of singing and dancing; but it was, no doubt, the same with that in which dramatic representations took place, and the audiences were similarly composed on both occasions. The description is not very precise, but the following is the purport.

"The chamber in which dancing is to be exhibited should be spacious and elegant. It should be covered over by an awning, supported by pillars richly decorated and hung with garlands. The master of the house should take his seat in the centre, on a throne: the inmates of the private apartments should be seated on his left, and persons of rank upon his right. Behind both are to be seated the chief officers of the state or household, and poets, astrologers, physicians, and men of learning, are to be arranged in the centre. Female attendants, selected for their beauty and figure, are to be about the person of the principal, with fans and chowris, whilst persons carrying wands are to be stationed to keep order, and armed men as guards are to be placed in different directions. When all are seated, the band is to enter and perform certain airs; after which the chief dancer is to advance from behind the curtain, and after saluting the audience, scattering at the same time flowers amongst them, she will display her skill."

The direction for the appearance of the dancer here indicates the separation of the performers from the audience by a screen or curtain; and of this frequent proofs are afforded, by the stage directions in different plays. The stage itself was termed *Ranga Bhumi* or *Nepathya*; but the latter term is also applied to the "within," as sounds or exclamations off the stage are said to occur, in the *Nepathya*. We might infer the distinction, also, from the instructions of *pravisati* and *nishkramati* "enter and exit," which are invariably given; but they admit the possibility as was the case in the early French theatre, of the actors continually in view of the audience throughout coming forward and withdrawing as required, without ever disappearing. It is often said, however where a character makes his appearance under the

influence of hurry or alarm, that he enters *apatskshepena*, with a toss of the curtain, throwing up or aside, apparently, the cloth suspended in the flat, instead of coming on regularly from the wing. It seems possible, also, that curtains were suspended transversely so as to divide the stage into different portions, open equally to the audience but screening one set of actors from the other, as if the one were within, and the other without a house or chamber. The first drama noticed in the next chapter often requires some such arrangement, unless, as is by no means unlikely, the whole was left to the imagination. It would appear, also, by the same piece, that part of the stage was raised, so as to form a terrace or balcony, as it was in Shakespeare's time in England.

The properties of the Hindu stage were, no doubt, as limited as the scenery, but seats, thrones, weapons, and cars with live cattle were used. The introduction of the latter is frequent, and could not always have been imaginary, being as in the *Mricchhakatis* especially, indispensable to the business. Whether any contrivance was had recourse to, to represent the aerial chariots of the gods is rather doubtful.

Costume was always observed, and various proofs occur of the personages being dressed in character. Females were represented in general by females, but it appears not to have been uncommon for men or lads to personate female characters, especially those of a graver character, like the Bauddha priestess in *Malati and Madhava*.

There is no want of instruction for stage business, and we have the "asides" and 'aparts' as regularly indicated as in the modern theatre in Europe. Even German precision is not unfrequently affected, and the sentiment with which the speaker is to deliver himself particularised. In directions for passing from one place to another, much is evidently left to the imagination, and the spectator must eke out the distance traversed by his own conceptions. There is often much want of dexterity in this part of the business, and a very little ingenuity would have avoided the incongruities produced. The defect, however, is common to the early plays of all theatres and in Shakespeare we find some very clumsy contrivances. Thus in *Richard the Second* the king orders the trumpets to sound, whilst the council apparently discusses what is to be done with Hereford and Norfolk, and without any further intervention, Richard commands the combatants, who as well as the king and the peers have been all the time on the stage, "to draw near and list, what with our council we have done."

These are the only notices that can be offered of the theatrical representations of the Hindus, and although scanty

leave no doubt of their general character. The Hindu stage, in fact, is best illustrated by those labours which have been so successfully addressed to the history of the stage in Europe, to which, prior to the sixteenth century, it may be considered precisely analogous, with the advantages of attention to costume and female personation. We must not extend this analogy, however, to the literary merits of the two theatres, as much of that of the Hindus may compete successfully with the greater number of the dramatic productions of modern Europe, and offers no affinity to the monstrous and crude abortions which preceded the introduction of the legitimate drama in the west

LIST OF HINDU PLAYS

Mrichchhakati	† Madhurani-ruddha
Sakuntala (translated by Sir William Jones, Monier Williams and many other orientalists)	† Kamsa Badha
Vikrama and Urvashi	† Pradyumna Vijaya
Malavika and Agnimitra	† Sridama Chaitra
Uttara Rama Charitra	† Dhurtta Naritaka
Malati and Madhava	† Dhurtta Saniagama
Mahavira Charitra	† Hasyarnava
Veni-Samhara	† Kautuka Sarvaswa
Mudra Rakshasa	Prabodha Chandrodaya (translated by Dr Taylor)
Udatta Raghava	|| Ramabhyudaya
Hanuman-Natika	|| Kunda Mala
Ratnavali	|| Saugandhikaharani
Viddha-Salabhanjika	|| Kusumasekhara Vijaya
Bala Ramayana	|| Raivata Madanika
Prachanda-Pandava	|| Narinavati
Karpura-Manjari	|| Vilasavati
Jarjadagnya Jaya	|| Sringara Tilaka
Saffiudra Mathana	|| Devi Mihadeva
Tripuradaha	|| Yadavodaya
Dhananjaya Vijaya	|| Bali Badha
Anargha Raghava	|| Anekamurtta
Sarada Tilaka	|| Mayakapalika
Yayati Charitra	|| Kridarasatati
Yayati-Vijaya	|| Kinnakavati Madhava
Yayati and Sarmishtha	|| Vindumati
Dutangada	|| Keliraiavatika
Mrigankalekha	|| Kamadritta
Vidagdha Madhava	† Sankalpi Suryodaya
Ablurama Mani	† Sudarsana Vijaya
	† Vasanti-ka Parinaya
	† Chitra Yajna

CHAPTER VII

SANSKRIT DRAMAS

THE MRICHCHHAKATI OR THE TOY-CART

This drama is a work of great interest, both in the literary and national history of the Hindus.

Although not named by the authority from which we have principally drawn our general view of the Hindu dramatic system, the *Dasa-Rupaka*, it is unquestionably alluded to in the text of that work, and we may therefore feel assured that this play was written earlier than the tenth century; there is every reason to infer much earlier.

The introduction of the *Mrichchhakati* attributes the composition to a king named Sudraka, and gives him a high character both in arms and letters: he lived, it is said, a hundred years and then burnt himself, leaving his kingdom to his son.

Over what kingdom Sudraka ruled is not mentioned. The writer of the *Kamandaki* says it was *Avanti* or *Ugein*; tradition, especially in the Dekhin, includes him amongst the universal monarchs of India, and places him between Chandragupta and Vikramaditya, without specifying his capital. The late Col. Wilford (*As. Res.* vol. ix.) considers him the same with the founder of the Andhra dynasty of Magadha kings, succeeding to the throne by deposing his master, the last of the Katiwa race to whom he was minister; but these averments are very questionable. The circumstances are in fact attributed, it is said, to a prince named Bahihita, or Sipraka, or Sindhuka or Mahakarni—and the identification of Sudraka with either or all of these, rests upon chronological data by no means satisfactorily established. From these it appears that the first Andhra king of Magadha reigned 456 years earlier than the last, or Pulimat, who, it is said, died A. D. 648, consequently the former reigned about A. D. 192. But it is stated, that in a work called the *Kumarika-Khanda*, a portion of the *Skanda-Purana*, it is asserted that in the year of the *Kali* 3300—say 10—a great king would reign (it does not appear where) named Sudraka. This date in our era is 190; the date of the first Andhra king, as mentioned above is 192; therefore Sudraka must be that king: a deduction which may possibly be correct, but which depends too much upon the accuracy of a work very little known and upon a calculation that yet requires to be revised, to be considered as decidedly invalidating the popular notion, that Sudraka

preceded Vikramaditya, and consequently the era of Christianity, by a century at least.

The attribution of a play to a regal author is not a singular occurrence. The *Ratnavali*, as will be hereafter noticed, is ascribed to a bard of like dignity : whether truly or not, whether the monarch was not rather the patron than the poet, is immaterial to the chronology of the drama; as, if the work of Sudraka's reign, it may be considered as the oldest extant specimen of the Hindu drama, and a composition of respectable antiquity. The play contains abundant internal evidence of an ancient date.

The style, though not meagre, is in general simple and unartificial, and of a day evidently preceding the elaborate richness of Hindu writing, not to speak of the fantastic tricks and abuses which began to disgrace Sanskrit composition apparently in the ninth and tenth centuries. This may be considered a safe indication in a work of such pretence as one attributed to a regal bard ; and although it could not be admitted alone as conclusive, yet, as associated with the name and date of Sudraka, it is a strong confirmation of the latter, at least, being correct.

Another circumstance in favour of the antiquity of the drama is derived from a peculiarity in the language of one of the chief characters. Samsthana, the Raja's brother-in-law, affects literature, with which he has so little conversancy, that his citations of poetic personages and events are as erroneous as frequent. Now it is a remarkable circumstance that all his citations are from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and that he never alludes to the chief actors in the Pauranic legends, as *Dhruva*, *Daksha*, *Prihlada*, *Bali* &c. There can be no good reason why he should not cite from a *Purana* as well as from either of the poems which bear a similarly holy character, and it is not likely that the author of the drama, who was thoroughly familiar with the poems, should not have been acquainted with the *Puranas* if they had existed, or been equally in circulation : we have great reason therefore to suspect that the *Mrichchhakati* was written prior to the composition of the *Puranas*, or at least before the stories they contain had acquired by their aggregation familiar and popular currency.

Peculiarities in manners contribute to a similar conclusion and the very panegyric upon Sudraka, specifying his voluntary cremation when arrived at extreme old age, praises him for an act proscribed in the *Kali*, or present period of the world. By all current legal authorities, except the texts of the most ancient, suicide is prohibited everywhere except at Prayaga, and is there allowed only under certain circumstances. The prohibition may be disregarded, it is true, but

such a breach of the law could not with any decency have been made the theme of public eulogium by a Brahman in the Sanskrit language, and therefore the event most probably preceded the law.

The subject of the piece, the love of a respectable Brahman for a courtesan, is also in favour of a period of some remoteness, although it may be allowed to mark a state of social demoralisation, a decline from the purity of Hindu institutions ; at the same time it seems probable that the practice of antiquity, as regarded the intercourse of the sexes, was much more lax than it pretends to be in modern days. The laws of Manu recognise the cohabitation of a Sudra female with a Brahman, as an inferior kind of wife, or a hand-maid. Now this association is prohibited in the *Kali* age, and its occurrence in the play, in which Vasantasena who may be supposed to be a Sudra, becomes the wife of Charudatta, indicates a period anterior to the law prohibiting the marriage of a Sudra by a Brahman. The choice of such an event for the subject of a dramatic performance, renders it likely that such a prohibition could not have been then even contemplated.

The most unquestionable proof, however, of high antiquity, is the accuracy with which *Buddha* observances are adverted to, and the flourishing condition in which the members of that sect are represented to exist. There is not only absolute toleration, but a kind of public recognition ; the ascetic who renders such essential service to the heroine being recommended or nominated by authority, chief of all the *Vihars* or *Buddha* establishments of *Ujjayin*.

At what period could this diffusion and prosperity of the *Buddha* faith have occurred, and when was it likely that a popular work should describe it correctly ? Many centuries have elapsed since Hindu writers were acquainted with the *Buddhas* in their genuine characters. Their tenets are preserved in philosophical treatises with something like accuracy, but any attempt to describe their persons and practices invariably confounds them with the *Jains*. The *Mritchchhakati* is as yet the only work where the *Buddhas* appear undisguised. Now we know from the Christian writers of the second century, that in their days the worship of *Butta* or *Buddha* was very prevalent in India. We have every reason to believe, that shortly after that time the religion began to decline, more in consequence of the rise and growth of the *Jains*, probably, than any persecution of the *Buddhas* ; and as it is clear that the drama was written in the days of their prosperity, it follows that we cannot fairly assign it a later date than the first centuries of the Christian era.

From the considerations thus stated, we cannot but

regard the *Mrichchhakati* as a work of considerable antiquity, and from internal evidence may very safely attribute it to the period when Sudraka the sovereign reigned, whether that be reduced to the end of the second century after Christ, or whether we admit the traditional chronology, and place him about a century before our era.

The revolution in the government of *Ujjayin*, which forms an underplot in the piece, is narrated with so little exaggeration, that it is probably founded on fact. As the simple narrative of a simple event, it is the more entitled to our credence; and it is not at all unlikely that the Brahmins, offended by their sovereign Palaka's public disregard of them, brought about a change of the government, employing a hermit and a cow-boy, or young peasant, as their instruments. This plain story is not improbably the origin of the obscure allusions which exercised the industry of Colonel Willford, and in which, and in the purport of the word *Arya* the name of the cowherd in the play, and in general acceptation a title of respect, he thought he could trace a reference to the history of Christianity in India — (As. Res. vol. x, Essay on the Sacred Isles of the West.) There is also an *Arya* of some renown in the history of Kashmir, whom the same learned and laborious but injudicious writer, identified with Salivahana. The real character of that personage may now be more accurately appreciated. (Essay on the History of Kashmir, As Res. Vol. xv. p. 84.)

The Drama *Mrichchhakati* cannot in equity be tried by laws with which the Author and his audience were unacquainted. If, therefore, it exceeds the limits of a play according to our approved models,* we are not to consider it of disproportionate length; if it occasionally arranges the business of the stage after what we conceive an awkward fashion, we are not to pronounce it devoid altogether of theatrical ingenuity; and if it delineates manners repugnant to our social institutions, we are not to condemn them as unnatural or immoral. We must judge the composition after the rules laid down by Schlegel, and identify ourselves, as much as possible, with the people and the time to which it belongs.

Overlooking, then, those peculiarities which are clearly referable to age and country, it will probably be admitted, that the *Toj cart* possesses considerable dramatic merit. The action, if it want other unities, has the unity of interest; and proceeds with a regular, though diversified, march to its final development. The interest is rarely suspended, and in every case the apparent interruption is, with great ingenuity, made subservient to the common design. The connexion of the two plots is much better maintained than in the play we

* The drama is in ten Acts.

usually refer to as a happy specimen of such a combination : the *Spanish Friar*. The deposition of Palaka is interwoven with the main story so intimately, that it could not be detached from it without injury, and yet it never becomes so prominent as to divert attention from that to which it is only an appendage.

There is considerable variety of character amongst the inferior persons of the Drama, and the two Captains of the Watch, and the two Chandatas, are plainly discriminated. The superior characters are less varied, but they are national portraiture, and offer some singular combinations : the tenderness and devotion of Vasantasena seem little compatible with her profession, and the piety and gravity of Charudatta still less so with his love. The master-piece of the play, however, is Samsthana, the Raja's brother-in-law. A character so utterly contemptible has perhaps been scarcely ever

spirited translator of Aristophanes, it is no longer the fashion for translators to direct the taste of their readers, and they must be left to condemn or approve for themselves. I shall, therefore refrain from any further observations on this head.

VIKRAMA AND URVASI
OR
THE HERO AND THE NYMPH

The drama of *Vikrama and Urvasi* is one of the three plays attributed to Kalidasa, already advantageously known to the western world as the author of *Sakuntala*. The introductory observation of the Manager in the prelude is our evidence to this effect, and it is corroborated by the correspondence of these two compositions, in many of their characteristic merits and defects. The subject of each is taken from heroic mythology, and a royal demigod and nymph of more than human mould are the hero and heroine of either, there is the same vivacity of description and tenderness of feeling in both, the like delicate beauty in the thoughts, and extreme elegance in the style. It may be difficult to decide to which the palm belongs, but the story of the present play is perhaps more skilfully woven, and the incidents rise out of each other more naturally than in *Sakuntala*, while, on the other hand, there is perhaps no one personage in it so interesting as the heroine of that drama.

Although, however, there is no reason to doubt that this play is the work of the same hand as that translated by Sir William Jones, the concurrence does not throw any further light upon the date or history of the author. We can only infer, from the observance of the same chaste style of composition, and the absence of any forced construction or offensive conceits, that they are both the production of a period anterior to the reign of Bhoja, when his Kalidasa, a man of fancy and taste, could descend to write a whole poem, the *Natodaya* for instance, in a strain of verbal paltering and a succession of jingling sounds.

The richness of the *Prakrit* in this play both in structure and in its metrical code, is very remarkable. A very great portion, especially of the fourth act is in this language, and in that act also a considerable variety of metre is introduced, it is clear, therefore, that this form of Sanskrit must have been highly cultivated long before the play was written, and this might lead us to doubt whether the composition can bear so remote a date as the reign of Vikramaditya (56 B. C.). It is yet rather uncertain whether the classical language of Hindu literature had at that time received so high a polish as appears in the present drama, and still

less, therefore, could the descendants have been exquisitely refined, if the parent was comparatively rude. We can scarcely conceive that the cultivation of *Prakrit* preceded that of Sanskrit, when we advert to the principles on which the former seems to be evolved from the latter; but it must be confessed that the relation between Sanskrit and *Prakrit* has been hitherto very imperfectly investigated, and is yet far from being understood.

The mythological notions of the author, as inferable from the benedictory stanzas opening all the three plays attributed to him, is rather adverse to a remote antiquity, as the worship of any individual deity as the Supreme Being, and with *Bhakti* or faith, appears to be an innovation in Hindu ritual and theology of a comparatively modern period. At the same time, the worship of Siva undoubtedly prevailed in the Dekhin at the commencement of the Christian era, and Vikramaditya, the patron of Kalidasa, is traditionally represented as devoted to Siva and his consort.

It may be thought some argument for the comparative antiquity of the present drama, that, it tells the story of Pururavas very differently from the Puranas, in several of which it may be found. We may suppose, therefore, that the play preceded those works; as, had it been subsequently composed, the poet would either spontaneously, or in deference to sacred authority, have adhered more closely to the Pauranic legend. The difference in the Puranas also indicates that corruption of taste, which we cannot hesitate regarding as the product of more modern and degenerate days.

The loves of Pururavas and Urvasi are related in various Puranas. The following is the story as it appears in the *Vishnu Purana*, in which and in the *Padma*,* it is more fully and connectedly detailed than perhaps in any other compo-

and her beauty was such as might enchant the world: no wonder, therefore, that Pururavas was at once inspired with fervent love. Considering in his rank and renown, the king did not hesitate to propose a matrimonial alliance to the nymph of heaven, she was nothing loth, but had not the power to comply, without previously exacting the bridegroom's consent to two conditions. Pururavas hesitated not to accede to the stipulations.

Urvasi had with her two pet rams, creatures of heavenly and illusive natures, and one of her conditions was, that the king should take these animals under his own charge, and guard against their being ever carried away by fraud or force. The other stipulation was that the nymph was never to behold the person of the king divested of his raiment. On the ready accession of Pururavas to these terms, Urvasi became his bride, and they dwelt together in the forest of Chaitraratha, near Alaka, the capital of Kuvera, for sixty-one years,* in perfect happiness and undiminished affection.

The absence of Urvasi was very soon felt in the upper sphere, and the inhabitants of Swarga found their enjoyments stale and unprofitable, no longer heightened by the agreeable manners and entertaining society of the nymph. The whole body of *Apsarasas*, *Siddhas*, *Gandharbas* and other tenants of Indra's heaven, regretted her loss, and determined to attempt her recovery as soon as the period of her exile, as denounced by the imprecation, should have expired. When this period arrived, they deputed some of the *Gandharbas* on the expedition, who undertook to bring about the violation of the terms on which the alliance of the king and the nymph depended. With this intent they entered the sleeping chamber of the monarch, and carried off one of the rams. The bleat of the animal woke Urvasi who echoed its cries with her lamentations, and aroused the prince. Apprehensive, however, of appearing before his bride undressed, Pururavas hesitated to pursue the thief, and thus incurred the angry reproaches of his spouse for his indifference to her loss. Presently the *Gandharbas* bore away the second ram, and the grief of Urvasi was afresh excited, the king's indignation also could no longer be restrained, and, determined to pursue and punish the ravishers, he leaped naked out of bed, trusting that the darkness of night would screen him from the eye of his consort. This was what his enemies desired, and he was no sooner off the couch than a vivid flash of lightning revealed him to view, and put an end to his union with the nymph of *Swarga*. Urvasi immediately dis-

* This is, however a mere moment in the extravagant duration of the life of Pururavas, according to the Puranas, there is nothing of the kind in the play.

appeared, accompanying the *Gandharbas* to the halls of Indra.

When Pururavas was conscious of his loss, his grief was so intense that it affected his intellects, and he long wandered frantic over the world in quest of his bride. After many years had elapsed he came to a lake in Kurukshetra, where he found several nymphs sporting on the bank ; amongst them was Urvasi. Recognizing her at once, he ran to her and with wild energy implored her return ; the nymph, however, was no longer disposed, even if she had been permitted, to comply with his wishes, and was deaf to all his entreaties ; and at last she succeeded in convincing him of the unreasonableness of his solicitations, and prevailed on him to resume his station, and the duties of a king, engaging on those terms to pay him an annual visit. Pururavas, however reluctantly, was compelled to submit, and returned sorrowfully but composed to his capital. His annual interviews with Urvasi were punctually repeated, and the fruit of this intercourse was the birth of six sons,* Ayus, Dhimat, Amavasu, Viswavasu, Satayus and Srutayus, who were the progenitors of the lunar race of kings.

The occasional interviews with his bride granted to Pururavas were far from satisfying his desires, and he still sighed for the permanent enjoyment of her society. The *Gandharbas* at last, pitying his distress, engaged to promote his reunion with the nymph, and sent the king a brazier charged with fire, with which they directed him to perform a sacrifice in the forest, to attain the gratification of all his wishes. The king repaired to the woods, but reflecting that he had quitted Urvasi in order to celebrate this rite, giving up the substance for the shadow, he returned to seek the nymph, leaving the vessel of fire in the thicket. Not finding his consort, he again directed his steps to the forest, but there the brazier was gone, and on the spot where it had stood, a *sams*** and *Asvattha**** tree had sprung up. After a little consideration Pururavas broke a branch from either tree, and carried them back to the palace, where, reciting the *Oayatri*, and rubbing the sticks together, he generated fire with the friction: this primeval fire he divided into three portions, and with them he performed various sacrifices and oblations.

The latter circumstances of this legend seem to indicate the introduction of fire worship into India by Pururavas, considered as a historical personage *** There may have been some old tradition to that effect whence the *Pauranic* writers derived the groundwork of their fable, but it is not noticed in the play, neither is any allusion made to it in the version of this story in another work in which it is found the *Vrikhat Katha* which differs in many particulars from both the play and the *Purana*. The story there, however, is very concisely narrated and the author has clearly taken merely the personages and course of the fable from what was currently known and given his own colouring to the incidents. It adds therefore, nothing to the history of the narrative, and may be either anterior or subsequent to the forms in which it is now presented to the readers. Another authority, however, the *Matsya Purana*, tells the story more agreeably to the tenor of the drama, as follows.

When a year had elapsed the divine *Tara* bore a son of surpassing splendour, arrayed in celestial raiment of a yellow colour, and richly decorated with heavenly gems. From his youth he was versed in regal duties, and was so skilled in the training of elephants that he taught the art and acquired the appellation of *Gajatedhaka*. The gods being assembled at the mansion of her husband, *Vrihaspati*, to perform the rites due to his birth, inquired of *Tara* whose son he was, and with much reluctance she acknowledged the royal *Soma* as his father. *Soma* therefore took the boy, and named him *Budha*, and gave him dominion on the earth, and inaugurated him supreme over the world. *Brahma* and the rest conferred upon him the dignity of a planetary power, and then took their departure.

The holy *Budha* begot by *Ha* a son, who performed by his own might a hundred *aswamedhas*. He was named *Pururavas*, and was revered by all worlds. He worshipped *Vishnu* on the peaks of *Himataya* and thence became the monarch of the sevenfold earth. *Kesin* and myriads of *Daityas* fell before his prowess, and *Urvasi*, fascinated by his personal graces became his bride.

Virtue *Wealth* and *Desire*, once paid this monarch a visit, curious to ascertain which of them held the first place in his esteem. The king received them with respect but paid to *Virtue* his profoundest homage. *Wealth* and *Desire* were offended by the preference shown to their companion. *Wealth* denounced a curse upon him that *Avarice* should occasion

*** The three fires are the *garhapatya* or perpetual fire maintained by a householder, the *ahavaniya* or congealed fire taken from the preceding and prepared for serving oblations, and the *dakshinagni* fire taken from either of the former and placed towards the south.

his fall, and *Desire* declared that he should be separated from his bride, and on that account suffer distraction in the forest of Kumara on the Gandharvadana mountain, but *Virtue* declared he should enjoy a long and pious life, that his descendants should continue to multiply as long as the sun and moon endured, and should ever enjoy the dominion of the earth. After this the divinities disappeared.

Pururavas was in the habit of paying a visit to Indra every day. Having ascended his car, accompanying the Sun in his southern course, he beheld on one occasion the demon Kesir seize and carry off the nymphs Chitrlekha and Urvasi. The king attacked the demon, and destroyed him with the shaft of Vayu by which he not only rescued nymphs but established Indra on his throne, which the demon had endangered. For this service Indra repaid the monarch with his friendship, and gave him additional power, splendour and glory.

Having invited the king to a festival, at which was represented the celebrated story of Lakshmi's election of a husband, the invention of Bharata, Indra commanded Menaka, Ranibha, and Urvasi to perform their respective parts. Urvasi, who represented Lakshmi, being engrossed by admiration of the king, forgot what she had to enact, and thereby incurred the high displeasure of the sage, who sentenced her to separation from the prince on earth, and condemned her to pine fifty five years transformed to a vine, until restored to the regrets of Pururavas. Urvasi having made the king her lord, resided with him, and after the term of the curse had expired bore him eight sons *Ajus, Dhritajus, Aswayus, Dhanayus, Dhritimat, Vasu, Ditiyata and Satayus*, all endowed with more than human power."

This story is evidently that of the play, although related less in detail, and with a few variations according to Pauranic taste, but it is clear that it is either derived from a common source with the narration of the drama or which is not improbable, that it has borrowed from the latter its general complexion. The nature of the relation which exists between the fiction as it appears in the drama and in the *Purans*, our readers will be able to appreciate for themselves after perusal of the former.

If it was necessary to peruse *Vikrama* and *Urvasi* with a liberal allowance for national peculiarities it is equally requisite, in the present instance to adapt our faith to the national creed, and to recognize for poetical and dramatic purposes, the creations of the mythology of the Hindus.

In this respect however, not very violent demand is made upon our imagination, as we have none of the monstrous extravagancies of the system forced upon our credulity. The

intercourse of heroes and of goddesses is the familiar theme of our youthful studies, and the transformation of Urvasi into a vine is not without abundant parallels in the metamorphoses of Ovid. The personages and situations of the Superhuman portion of the drama are both elegant and picturesque ; and the grouping of the nymphs upon the peaks of the Himalaya, or the descent of Narada through the fields of ether, might be represented with as much beauty as facility by the machinery of the theatres of Europe.

There is also a peculiarity in the mythos of this drama, which identifies it with the dramatic compositions of antiquity. Trivial as the incidents may appear, unimportant, as may be the loves of the hero and the heroine, both persons and events are subject to an awful control, whose interference invests them with a dignity superior to their natural level. Fate is the ruling principle of the narrative ; and the monarch and the nymph, and the sovereign of the gods himself, are portrayed as subject to the inscrutable and inevitable decrees of destiny.

The simplicity of the story does not admit of much display of character, but the timid constancy of Urvasi is not unhappily contrasted with the irresolute haughtiness of the queen. The poet, too, has shown himself not unacquainted with the springs of human feelings, and his observations on the relations of the sexes in domestic life are equally shrewd and just.

The chief charm of this piece, however, is its poetry. The story, the situations, and the characters are all highly imaginative, and nothing can surpass the beauty and justice of many of the thoughts. To select one as an example were to disparage a number of other passages and they may be left to the critical acumen and taste of the reader.

UTTARA-RAMA-CHARITRA
OR
CONTINUATION OF THE HISTORY OF RAMA

The *Uttara-Rama-Charitra*, or continuation of the history of Rama, is one of the three dramas attributed to Bhavabhuti, and the internal evidence of the composition fully corroborates the traditional appropriation. The style is equally vigorous and harmonious as that of the *Malati and Madhava*; several of the sentiments found in that play recur in this; and the general character of the two dramas, notwithstanding the difference of their subjects, offers many analogies. We have the same picturesque description and natural pathos in both.

The subject of the *Uttara Rama Charitra* is, as the name implies, a continuation of the history of Rama, the prince of

Ajodhiya, and comprises the events that occurred subsequent to the war which constitutes the subject of the *Ramayana*. It is taken from the last or supplementary section of that poem, one of the two principal poetical works of the Hindus not wholly mythological, and which have some pretensions to be included in the Epic class. It is, however, more correctly speaking, a continuation of a play by the same author, the *Vira-Rama-Charitra*, in which the martial exploits of Rama, as described in the *Ramayana*, are dramatised. The date at which the *Uttara-Rama Charitra* was composed cannot be deduced, with certainty, from anything that occurs in the course of the play. It offers nothing, however, that is incompatible with the period at which the author is said to have flourished, or the eighth century, as will be noticed in the introduction to *Malati and Madhav*. The style is classical, and although elaborate, is not deformed by extravagant refinement. The thoughts are pure and undisgraced by conceits; and altogether the composition belongs to the era of good taste in Hindu writing, although in an advanced period, and upon the eve of its decline. But the most decided evidence of an early date is furnished by the allusions to the *Vedas*, and to some parts of the Hindu ritual which are not now familiarly known, and which there is reason to think have long fallen into disuse. The condition of the Hindu religion must have been very different, when this drama was composed, from any under which it has been observable for some centuries past.

The story of Rama has been communicated to European readers so fully in the writings of Jones, Wilford, Maurice, Ward and Faber, as well as in the *Hindu Pantheon* of Moor, and in the translation of the two first books of the *Ramayana*, by Carey and Marshman, of Serampore, as well as probably by this time in the translation of the whole poem by A. W. Schlegel, that the events which precede the action of the drama will be familiar to many of those who may peruse it, in order, however, to render it intelligible to those to whom the story may be unknown, a brief recapitulation of the previous adventures of its hero may not be superfluous. The author himself has not thought a preparation of this kind unnecessary even for a Hindu audience, as he has introduced, with some ingenuity, a summary sketch of the leading incidents of Rama's earlier career. A reference to the notes accompanying that part of the drama will more fully explain the circumstances there alluded to, and supply some particulars of Rama's adventures, not comprised in the following brief narrative.

The deities of the Hindu Pantheon by no means enjoy undisturbed possession of divinity, and they are obliged to con-

tend for their own supremacy, or for the protection of the world, with various formidable races known as *Asuras*, *Daiṭas*, *Danavas* and *Rakshasas*, or different orders of Titanic and gigantic beings of superhuman strength and vitality, who, from the earliest periods,

*Extrahere moles ad se lata summa parabant,
Et magnum bello sollicitare totum.*

Of these, the *Rakshasas* bear the least of a celestial character, and belong to the malignant creations of ancient and modern tale, who to gigantic strength and stature unite particular hostility to man, and an appetite for human flesh. In the poetical mythology of the Hindus they are descended from *Brahma* through one of his will-born progeny, the sage and saint *Pulastya*; but their numbers are every day augmented by the addition of the disembodied spirits of wicked men, condemned to this form for a season, in punishment of their crimes; and the class also comprehends sundry deformed and hideous hands, who are especially attached to the service of the god of wealth, and are supposed to keep watch over his treasures.

The first and most celebrated of the posterity of *Pulastya* were *Ravana* and his brethren—

—*Propago*

*Contemtrix superum, saeque avidissima etatis,
Et violenta*

The half brother of *Kuvera* the god of wealth, *Ravana*, a *Rakshasa* with ten heads, dispossessed that deity of his capital *Lanka*, in which he seated himself, and thence spread terror, not only over the world, but throughout the heavens, compelling many of the subordinate divinities to perform the menial functions of his palace. To terminate these violences and alarms, *Visnū* was obliged to come down to earth, where he was born as *Rama* or *Rāma-chandra*, the eldest son of *Dasaratha*, a prince of the Solar dynasty and sovereign of *Ayodhiya* or *Oudh*, by his wife *Kausalya*. Other portions of the same deity animated the sons of *Dasaratha*, by his other wives, *Kaikeyi* and *Sumitra*, the former of whom gave birth to *Bharata*, and the latter to *Lakshmana* and *Satrughna*. A number of the minor deities and the attendant spirits of heaven likewise assumed terrestrial shapes, and in the form of apes and bears became the warriors and allies of *Rama*.

Whilst yet a lad, the services of *Rama* were solicited by the sage *Viswamitra* to repel and stay the fiends, by whom the religious rites of himself and other pious individuals were interrupted. *Rama* accordingly accompanied him, destroyed the *Rakshasi* or female fiend *Taraka*, and slew or chased other evil genii from the residence of the sages. On

this occasion Viswamitra transferred to Rama and his descendants the command of the celestial weapons, or the power to wield the elements in war.

After these exploits, Viswamitra conducted Rama to Mithila, the kingdom of Janaka, whose daughter Sita, now marriageable, was to reward the prowess of the prince who should bend a bow, given to an ancestor of the monarch of Mithila by the god Siva. Rama alone succeeded in the attempt, and snapped the bow asunder. The indignity thus offered to his tutelary divinity aroused the wrath of Parasurama, a previous incarnation of Vishnu, still upon earth, who, coming to Mithila to defy and exterminate Rama-chandra, was foiled by his junior, and obliged to return, humbled and in peace, to the retirement whence he had hastened on hearing of the bow's being broken. Rama received the recompense of his vigour in the hand of Sita; and at the same time Urnula her sister, and Mandavi and Srutakirtti, her cousins, were married to the other three sons of Dasaratha.

When Rama approached to years of maturity, his father, by the advice of his ministers, and according to the wishes of his people, proposed to associate him in the government as Yuvaraja, young king, or Cæsar: a delegation of authority that seems to have been constant under the old political system of the Hindus, and traces of which were preserved till recent times, in the petty Hindu states to the east of Bengal. Domestic intrigue, however, forced Dasaratha to forego his purpose, and to change the elevation of Rama into exile. His second wife, Kaikeyi, instigated by the counsels of a female attendant, insisted upon the king's fulfilment of promise which he had formerly made, and which, like the pledge of the gods of Olympus, was not to be recalled, whatever mischief might ensue. Dasaratha, when formerly wounded dangerously in the battle, was preserved by the cares of Kaikeyi; in acknowledgment of which service he offered her two boons whenever she should demand them. These she now claimed,—the installation of her son Bharata, and the banishment of Rama for fourteen years, and Dasaratha was forced to comply, although upon the departure of his son he expired with grief. Bharata refused to accept the succession to the throne, and hastened after Rama to bring him back to the capital; but that prince, in veneration of his father's memory, determined to fulfil his injunction, notwithstanding his decease; and leaving Bharata regent during his absence, repaired to the forests of Southern India, accompanied by his wife, and Lakshmana his brother.

Conformably to current traditions, and the evidence of names assigned to different places in the peninsula, Rama passed from Ayodhya to the south west, and first established

himself near the sources of the Godavari in the Dandaka forest. On his journey, and during his residence in the thickets, he encountered and discomfited various members of the Rakshasa tribe, and amongst others maltreated Surpanakha, the sister of Ravana, requiting the tender sentiments with which he inspired her by cutting off her nose and ears. She first applied to her brothers, Khara and Dushana, who guarded the forests with numerous bands of Rakshasas, to avenge her ; but when they were slain in the quarrel by the sons of Dasaratha, she carried her complaints to Ravana in Lanka, and instigated him to resent the injuries that had been inflicted on her person, especially by inspiring him with a passion for Sita. In order to effect his purpose Ravana repaired to Panchavati, the residence of Rama with Maticia, the son of Taraka, who, transforming himself into a deer, beguiled Rama from his cottage in chase of the supposed animal. Lakshmana, by desire of Sita, going to look for his brother, she was left alone, on which Ravana, approaching her as an old mendicant, then discarded his disguise, and carried her off. On his way he was at first stopped by Jatayu, a mythological being, a chief of the winged tribes and a friend of Dasaratha, who was speedily overcome and left

the place of her existence, Hanumat, after setting Lanka on fire returned to Rama, and conveyed to him the information which he had been sent out to procure.

On receipt of this intelligence, Rama, accompanied by Sugriva and an innumerable host of his monkey subjects, advanced to the point of the peninsula opposite to the northern extremity of Ceylon, where a passage across the channel by which that island is separated from the Coromandel coast was accomplished, by casting rocks and mountains into the sea, and thus constructing a bridge, the vestiges of which are said to be still visible in the reef of rocks which render the Straits of Malacca impassable to vessels of burthen. At this point, Rama was joined by Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana, who having in vain counselled the restitution of Sita, and incurred by his advice the displeasure of the sovereign of Lanka, deserted his cause and went over to the enemy.

Having crossed the sea and encamped in the vicinity of the capital of Ravana, the baboon army was encountered by the monstrous bands in the service of Lanka, and a variety of engagements ensued, which, although attended by the occasional discomfiture of the assailants, ended in the utter defeat of the Rakshasas, and the death of Ravana, by the hands of Rama. Upon his fall Sita was recovered; but before being readmitted to her husband's embraces, she was compelled to vindicate her purity by undergoing the ordeal of fire. Having passed unhurt through the blazing pile, and being further justified by the oral testimony of Brahma and other gods, as well as the spirit of Dasaratha, her father-in law, she was once more united to Rama, who, instilling Vibhishana in the kingdom of Lanka, over which he is supposed still to reign, returned to Ayodhya, where Bharata gladly restored the sovereignty to his brother.

The incidents that immediately followed the return of Rama to his capital form the subject of the drama, and therefore require no notice in this place. The catastrophe is, however, differently brought about in the *Ramayana* and *Raghuvam*, a poetical account of Rama and his race, and those in a different manner. Rama discovers his sons in consequence of their recital of the *Ramayana* at his sacrifice, and Sita, upon her innocence being recognised by the people, is suddenly carried off by the goddess of the earth, and disappears for ever. This *dénouement* is very judiciously altered to her reunion with her sons and husband, in the play. Rama died soon after the disappearance of Sita, and divided his kingdom—between his sons; but Kusa, being the elder, and having established his capital at Ayodhya, is regarded as the continuator of the line of Raghu. The Kachahwa Raj-

puts affect to derive their descent from Kusa whilst another Rajput tribe, the Badkusa, regard Lavi as the founder of their race

This drama labours under the disadvantage of a subject drawn from national mythology, and although the more interesting on that account to those to whom it was originally addressed, it must lose much of its merit in the eyes of those to whom the mythos of the Hindus is unattractive or unknown

Another defect consequent upon the choice of its subject, is the want of action. The incidents are few, and although not unconnected with each other, nor independent of the *dénouement*, they occur abruptly, and are separated by intervals of time and place, which trespass a little too strongly upon dramatic probabilities, and impair the interest of the story

Apart from these defects, however, the drama has much to recommend it, and has more pretension to genuine pathos than perhaps any other specimen of the Hindu theatre. The mutual sorrows of Rama and Sita in their state of separation are pleasingly and tenderly expressed, and the meeting of the father and his sons may be compared advantageously with similar scenes with which the fictions of Europe, both poetical and dramatic, abound

Besides the felicitous expression of softer feelings, this play has some curious pictures of the *bedu* ideal of heroic bearing, and of the duties of a warrior and a prince. A higher elevation can scarcely be selected for either. The true spirit of chivalry pervades the encounter of the two young princes and the quiet devotedness with which Rama sacrifices his wife and domestic happiness to the prosperity of his subjects, is a worthy counterpart to the immolation of natural affections to public interest, which is so frequent in the early history of Greece

The characters of the drama are individualised by the features just noticed as belonging to those of the heroic class, and by the sentiments of piety and the tone of authority which animate the religious personages introduced upon the scene amongst whom the females bear so important a part, *may be regarded as another characteristic peculiarity*. The incidents as already noticed are not numerous but they are dramatic and interesting and upon the feelings of a Hindu must have exercised a powerful influence. To a belief that vivifies all objects and gives to mountains and rivers divine forms and sentient natures, the representations of this play must have been awful and sublime. The most inferior of the personages exhibited are the spirits of air, or of the forest, or the flood, who mingle familiarly and affectionately

with demigods and deified sages. Earth, the mother of all beings, and Ganga, the river of the three worlds, are introduced in person, and the final reunion of Rama with his family is witnessed, not only by the people of Ayodhya and the elders of either race, but by the congregated deities of earth and heaven.

The language of the beings of fictitious existence is either narrative or descriptive, and in the former is simple, and in the latter picturesque. That of the human characters is, as usual with our author, rather passionate than poetical, but some brilliant thoughts occur, the justice and beauty of which are not surpassed in any literature. The comparison of Chandraketu to a lion's cub turning to brave the thunder-bolt is one of these, and another is the illustration of the effects of education upon minds possessed or destitute of natural gifts. It is needless to specify other passages. The general tone of the piece is imaginative and elevated, and it is entitled at least to the designation of a dramatic poem.

MALATI AND MADHAVA
OR
THE STORY OF MARRIAGE

Malati and Madhava, or, *The Loves of the Youth Madhava and the Maiden Malati*, has been already introduced to the knowledge of European readers, as an outline of the plot and a translation of part of the fifth Act were published by Cole brooke in his *Essay on Sanskrit and Prikrit Prosody*.* The specimens then given were calculated to convey a favourable impression of the merits of the drama, which the perusal of the entire piece will probably confirm.

The story of *Malati and Madhava* is one of pure invention, and the piece belongs to the class of compositions termed *Prakarana*. It is referred to as an example of the class by all the works on Rhetoric, the oldest of which it consequently precedes. The history of the drama, however, or more correctly of its author, is attended with more certainty than most of the topics of the literary history of the Hindus.

By the introductions to *Malati and Madhava*, and the other dramas of the same writer, the *Uttara-Rama-Charitra* and the *Vira Charitra*, we are made fully acquainted with his origin and family. It appears from these accounts that Bhavabhuti, also named Srikrintha, or he in whose throat eloquence resides, was the son of a native of the South of India, a Brahmin of Berr or Beder, and a member of the tribe of Brahmins who pretend to trace their descent from the sage Kas-

the vicinity of Condavir. The site of Bhavabhuti's birth place is fully corroborated by the peculiar talent he displays in describing nature in her magnificence a talent very unusual in Hindu birds, who delight to portray her minor beauties and one which he no doubt derived from his early familiarity with the eternal mountains and forests of Gondwana.

It appears, however, that the place of Bhavabhuti's nativity was not the scene of his literary triumphs and that these were attained under the patronage of the princes of Hindustan. The precision with which he delineates the topographical features of Ujjayini and its vicinity leaves little doubt of his having spent some time at that city for accuracy in this respect could have been obtained at any time, if done only by actual observation. The *Bhaja Prabandha* indeed includes Bhavabhuti amongst the writers at the Court of Bhaja at Dhar, but is intimated elsewhere* that this work can only be received as an authority for the priority of the writers described in it to the date of its own composition the grouping whether as regards place or time, being altogether fanciful. A preferable authority the text of the *Dasa Rupika* refers Bhavabhuti to some period anterior to Muni the predecessor of Bhaja by its alluding clearly to *Ujjayi* and *Ujjhava* and from it therefore we gather that the play was composed before the eleventh century. How long a time before that date we have also evidence to substantiate, and from the History of Casimir we learn that Bhavabhuti flourished in the eighth century, being patronised by Vasovarman the sovereign of Kanor who reigned about A.D. 720.

The date thus given to the compositions of Bhavabhuti is quite in harmony with their internal evidence. The manners are purely Hindu without any foreign admixture. The appearance of women of rank in public, and their exemption from any personal restraint in their own habitations are very incompatible with the presence of Mohammedan rulers. The licensed existence of Buddhist ascetics their access to the great and their employment as teachers of science are other peculiarities characteristic of an early date, whilst the worship of Siva in this terrific form and the prevalence of the practices of the *Yoga* are indications of a similar tendency. The *Linga* worship of Siva, we know, was everywhere the predominant form of the Hindu faith when the Mohammedans first invaded India. With respect to the *Yogins*, by whom mystical rites were mostly cultivated it may be observed that there are many reasons for giving them a remote date the excavations at Elephanta and Ellora appear to be their work the sect is now almost extinct in Hindustan, and the *Kasi Khanda*, a work probably of seven

* Sanskrit Dictionary Preface.

or eight centuries remote, states that the *Yog* cannot be practised in the present age. *Mysticism*, in fact, gave way first to the philosophy of Sankaracharya in the seventh or eighth century, and was finally expelled by the new doctrine of *Bhakti*, or faith, which was introduced by Ramanuja and the *Vaishnavas* in the eleventh century, and has since continued to be the ruling dogma of every sect of Hindus.

The style of *Malati and Madhava* may also be referred to the period at which we may conclude that it was written. It is free from the verbal quibbling and extravagance of combination which the compositions of the time of Bhoja offer, but it comes very near to them: although classical, it is highly laboured; although forcible, it is diffuse, and is not unfrequently obscure. It abounds in the most complicated prosody, and is cited by Colebrooke for a specimen of the measure called *dandaka*, or a verse of fifty-four syllables, and a stanza consequently containing two hundred and sixteen. The author is also fond of an unreasonable display of learning, and occasionally substitutes the phraseology of logic or metaphysics for the language of poetry and nature. At the same time, the beauties predominate over the defects, and the language of the drama is in general of extraordinary beauty and power. The blemishes of the composition have materially affected the translation; and while it is very probable that the obscurity of some passages had led to an inexact interpretation of their import, the prosaic prolixity of others has involved the necessity of considerable compression and occasional omissions. The latter, when of any importance, will be particularised as they occur.

Malati and Madhava divides with *Sakuntala* the honour of being still occasionally, although not very commonly, read by the Pandits; copies of it, therefore, are not very scarce. That used for the author's translation was transcribed from Colebrooke's, as being singularly free from errors. It had the advantage also of being illustrated by two excellent *commentaries*. The most copious of these is the work of Jagaddhara, the son of Ratnadhara, described as a learned teacher, the prince of Pandits and poets, and administrator of law; the other is by a royal hand, the Rajadhiraja Malanika. We have no further particulars of these commentators except that the first is known to have been a Maithila Brahman, and not very ancient.

The drama *Malati and Madhava* requires less allowance for any peculiarity in national manners than most of the specimens of the Hindu theatre. It offers nothing to offend the most fastidious delicacy; and may be compared in this respect, advantageously, with many of the dramas of modern

Europe, which treat of the passion that constitutes its subject.

The manner in which love is here depicted is worthy of observation, as correcting a mistaken notion of the influence which the passion exercises over the minds of the natives of at least one portion of Asia. However intense the feeling—and it is represented as sufficiently powerful to endanger existence—it partakes in no respect of the impetuosity which it has pleased the writers of the West to attribute to the people of the East;

The barbarous nations, whose inhuman love
Is wild desire, fierce as the suns they feel.

The fierceness of their suns is a very efficient cause for the gentleness of their passions; and the hardy children of the north find their complicated system of social restraint insufficient to curb those impulses, which they derive from a less enervated frame and a more jolly spirit.

If however, the love of the Hindus be less vehement, than that of the Goth, Dane, or Norman of uncivilized days, it is equally remote from the extravagance of adoration which later times have learnt from those who never taught the lesson—the mirrors of Chivalry, who were equally vowed to the service of God and the ladies. There is no reason to think their love was a whit purer than that of any other people or time; but the fancy was favourable to poetical imagination, and has beneficially influenced the manners of modern Europe. The heroine of this drama is loved as a woman; she is no goddess in the estimation of her lover; and although her glances may inflame, no hint is given that her frowns can kill. At the same time, Madhava's passion is as metaphysical as need be, and

Malati alone,
Heard, felt and seen, possesses every thought,
Fills every sense, and pants in every vein.

The passion of Malati is equally intense with that of Juliet; but her unconquerable reserve, even to the extent of denying her utterance to him she loves more than life, is a curious picture of the restraint to which the manners of Hindu women were subjected even whilst they were in enjoyment, as appears from the drama, of considerable

It is not, however, wholly wanting ; and Makaranda and Madayantika are much less mere tovers than Madhava and Malati. The cautious, though devoted perseverance of Kamandaki is maintained throughout ; and the benevolence of Saudamini is well contrasted with the malignity of Kapalkundala.

The incidents of the story are varied, and some of them are highly dramatic. They are rather diffusely spread out, but they are all essential to the denouement, the concurrence of all parties in the union of the lovers.

There is more passion in the thoughts of Bhavabhuti than in those of Kalidasa, but less fancy. There are few of the elegant similitudes in which the latter is so rich, and there is more that is commonplace, and much that is strained and obscure. In none of his dramas does Bhavabhuti make any attempt at wit, and we have no character in either of his three dramas approaching the Vidushaka of either of the two preceding pieces. On the other hand, he expatiates more largely in the description of picturesque scenery and in the representation of human emotions, and is perhaps entitled to even a higher place than his rival, as a poet.

MUDRA - RAKSHASA
OR
THE SIGNET OF THE MINISTER

The *Mudra-Rakshasa* is a drama of a very different description from either of the preceding, being wholly of a political character, and representing a series of Machiavelian stratagems, influencing public events of considerable importance. Those events relate to the history of Chandragupta, who is very probably identifiable with the *Sandrocottus* of the Greeks ; and the drama therefore, both as a picture of manners and as a historical record, possesses no ordinary claims upon our attention.

The object of the play is to reconcile Rakshasa, the hostile minister of Nanda, the late king of Palibothra, to the individuals by whom, or on whose behalf, his sovereign was murdered, the Brahman Chanakya and the prince Chandragupta. With this view, he is rendered, by the contrivances of Chanakya, an object of suspicion to the prince with whom he has taken refuge, and is consequently dismissed by him. In this deserted condition, he learns the imminent danger of a dear friend, whom Chanakya is about to put to death ; and in order to effect his liberation, surrenders himself to his enemies. They offer him, contrary to his expectations, the rank and power of prime minister ; and the parties are finally friends. It is unnecessary to describe the plot more fully in this place.

Simple as is the subject of the drama, there is no want of action in its development. The stratagems of Chanakya are varied, numerous, and well connected and although there is occasionally some want of probability in their execution, yet they are made to contribute very successfully and ingeniously towards the production of their combined result. It must be acknowledged, that the political code from which they emanate exhibits a morality not a whit superior to that of the Italian school, but a remarkable, and in some respects a redeeming principle, is the inviolable and devoted fidelity which appears as the uniform characteristic of servants, emissaries, and friends a singular feature in the Hindu character which it has not yet wholly lost.

The author of the play is called in the prelude Visakha-datta, the son of Pritu, entitled Maharaṇa, and grandson of the Samanta or chief Valeswaradatta. We are not much the wiser for this information, as we can scarcely venture to conclude—although it is not impossible—that the Choulian chief of Ajmer Pritu Rū, who was killed at the end of the twelfth century by the Mohammedans, is here intended. There is nothing unusual in a prince's being an author, or at least a reputed one, and the closing speech of the drama clearly refers to the victorious progress of a foreign foe, whom it may not be unreasonable to connect with the Ghorian invasion.*

Major Willord has called the author of the *Mudra-Rakshasa*, Ananta, and quotes him as declaring that he lived on the banks of the Godavari (As. Res. vol. v p 280). This, however, must be an error, as three copies one of them a Dekhini manuscript in the Telugu character, have been consulted on the present occasion, and they all agree in the statement above given.

There is a commentary on the drama by Vateswara Misra, a Maithila Brahman, the son of Gauripati Misra, who has laboured with more pains than success to give a double interpretation to the composition, and to present it as a system of policy as well as a play. Another commentary by Guhasena is said to exist, but it has not been met with, and the one referred to, owing to the commentator's mystification of obvious meanings, and the exceedingly incorrect state of the manuscript, has proved of no advantage.

It may not here be out of place to offer a few observations on the identification of Chandragupta and Sindrocotus. It is the only point on which we can rest with anything like confidence in the history of the Hindus, and is therefore of

* At the same time it is to be observed, that according to the Prithwi Ray Itihasa, the father of Pritu, the king of Ajmer, was named Somaswara, and his grandfather Ananda.

vital importance in all our attempts to reduce the reigns of their kings to a rational and consistent chronology. It is well worthy, therefore, of careful examination ; and it is the more deserving of scrutiny, as it has been discredited by rather hasty verification and very erroneous details.

Sir William Jones first discovered the resemblance of the names and concluded Chandragupta to be one with Sāndrocottus (*As. Res.* vol. iv. p. 11). He was, however, imperfectly acquainted with his authorities, as he cites "a beautiful poem" by Somadeva, and a tragedy called the coronation of Chandra, for the history of this prince. By the first is no doubt intended the large collection of tales by Somabhatta, the *Vishat-Katha*, in which the story of Nanda's murder occurs : the second is, in all probability, the play we notice, and which begins after Chandragupta's elevation to the throne. In the fifth volume of the *Researches* the subject was resumed by Colonel Willford, and the story of Chandragupta is there told at considerable length, and with some accessions which can scarcely be considered authentic. He states also that the *Mudra-Rakshasa* consists of two parts, of which one may be called the coronation of Chandragupta, and the second his reconciliation with Rakshasa, the minister of his father. The latter is accurately enough described, but it may be doubted whether the former exists.

Colonel Willford was right also in observing that the story is briefly related in the *Vishnu-Purana* and *Bhagavata* and in the *Vishat-Katha* ; but when he adds, that it is told also in a lexicon called the *Kamandaki*, he has been led into error. The *Kamandaki* is a work on *Niti* or polity, and does not contain the story of Nanda and Chandragupta. The author merely alludes to it in an honorific verse, which he addresses to Chanakya as the founder of political science, the

It does not appear that Colonel Wilford had investigated the drama himself, even when he published his second account of the story of Chandra-gupta (*As Res* Vol ix p 93), for he continues to quote the *Indra Rakshasa* for various matters which it does not contain. Of these the adventures of the king of Vikatpalli and the employment of the Greek troops, are alone of any consequence as they would mislead us into a supposition that a much greater resemblance exists between the Grecian and Hindu histories than is actually the case.

Discarding, therefore these accounts, and laying aside the marvellous part of the story, I shall endeavour from the *Vishnu* and *Bhagavata Puranas*, from a popular version of the narrative as it runs in the south of India from the *Vrshat-katha*,* and from the play to give what appear to be the genuine circumstances of Chandra-gupta's elevation to the throne of Palibothra.

A race of kings denominated Satsunagas, from Sisunaga the first of the dynasty, reigned in Magadha, or Behar their capital was Paliputra, and the last of them was named Nanda or Mahapadma Nanda. He was the son of a woman of the Sudra caste and was hence, agreeably to Hindu law, regarded as a Sudra himself. He was a powerful and ambitious prince, but cruel and avaricious, by which defects as well as by his inferiority of birth, he probably provoked the animosity of the Brahmans. He had by one wife eight sons who, with their father, were known as the nine Nandas, and according to the popular tradition, he had by a wife of low extraction, called Mura, another son named Chandra-gupta. This last circumstance is not stated in the *Puranas* nor *Vrshat-katha*, and rests therefore on rather questionable authority, at the same time, it is very generally asserted, and is corroborated by the name Maurya one of Chandra-gupta's denominations, which is explained by the commentator on the *Vishnu Purana* to be a patronymic formative, signifying the son of Mura. It also appears from the play, that Chandra-gupta was a member of the same family as Nanda, although it is not there stated that he was Nanda's son.

But whatever might have been the origin of this prince, it is very likely that he was made the instrument of the insubordination of the Brahmans, who, having effected the destruction of Nanda and his sons, raised Chandra-gupta, whilst yet a youth, to the throne. In this they were aided by a prince from the north of India, to whom they promised an accession of territory as the price of his alliance. The execution of the treaty was evaded, very possibly by his assassin.

* In no other *Purana* has the story been found, although most of the principal works of this class have been carefully examined.

tion; and to revenge his father's murder, his son led a mingled host against Magadha, containing amongst other troops, Yavanas, whom we may be permitted to consider as Greeks. The storm was averted, however, by jealousies and quarrels amongst the confederates. The army dispersed, and Malayaketu, the invader, returned baffled and humbled to his own country. Chandragupta reigned twenty-four years, and left the kingdom to his son. We have now to see how far the classical writers agree with these details.

The name is an obvious coincidence. Sandrocottus and Chandragupta can scarcely be considered different appellations. But the similarity is no doubt still closer. *Alienæus*, as first noticed by Wilford (*As. Res.* vol. v. p 262), and subsequently by Schlegel (*Indische Bibliothek*), writes the name, Sandrakoptus, and its other form, although more common, is very possibly a mere error of the transcriber. As to the Andracottus of Plutarch, the difference is more apparent than real, the initial sibilant being often dropped in Greek proper names.

This name is, however, not the only coincidence in denominational titles that may be traced. We find in the play that Chandragupta is often called Chandra simply, or the moon, of which Chandramas is a synonym; and accordingly, we find in Diodorus Siculus, the king of the Gangaridæ, whose power alarms the Macedonian, is there named Xandrames. The Aggramen of Quintus Curtius is merely a blundering perversion of this appellation.

There are other names of the prince, the sense of which, though not their sound, may be discovered in classical writers. These are Vrishata, and perhaps Maurya. The first unquestionably implies a man of the fourth or servile caste; the latter is said by Wilford to be explained in the *Jati-Vstaka* the offspring of a barber and a Sudra woman, or of a barber and a female slave (*As. Res.* vol. v. p. 285). It is most usually slated, however, to mean the offspring of Mura, as already observed, and the word does not occur in any of the vocabularies in the sense attached to it by Col. Wilford. It is sufficient, however, to observe, that the term *Vrishata*, and frequent exoressions in the drama, establish the inferior

origin of Chandragupta, a circumstance which is stated of the king of the Gangaridæ at the time of Alexander's invasion by Diodorus Siculus, Quintus Curtius, and Plutarch.

According to the two former of these writers, Xandrames or Chandran as was contemporary with Alexander. They add, that he was the son of the queen by an intrigue with a barber, and that his father, being raised to honour and the king's favour, compassed his benefactor's death, by which he paved the way for the sovereignty of his own son, the ruling prince. We have no indication of these events in the Hindu writers, and Chandragupta as has been noticed, is usually regarded as the son of Nanda, or at least a relative. It may be observed that his predecessors were Sudras, and the character given to Mahapadma Nanda in the *Vishnu-Purana*, agrees well enough with the general tenor of the classical accounts, as to his being of low origin and estimation, although an active and powerful prince. If Nanda be the monarch alluded to, there has been some error in the name; but, in either case, we have a general coincidence in the private history of the monarch of the Gangaridæ, as related by the writers of the east or west.

If the monarch of Behar at the time of Alexander's invasion was Nanda, it is then possible that Chandragupta, whilst seeking, as the Hindus declare, the support of foreign powers to the north and north-west of India, may have visited Alexander, as asserted by Plutarch and Justin. We cannot, however, attach any credit to the marvellous part of the story as told by the latter; nor can we conceive that a mere adventurer, as he makes Sandrocopius to have been, should have rendered himself master of a mighty kingdom, in so brief an interval as that between Seleucus and Alexander, and by the aid of vagabonds and banditti alone.

Although, therefore, the classical writers had gleaned some knowledge of Chandragupta's early history, it is very evident that their information was but partially correct, and that they have confounded names, whilst they have exaggerated some circumstances and misrepresented others. These defects, however, are very venial, considering the imperfect communication that must have subsisted between the Greeks and Hindus, even at the period of Alexander's invasion, and the interval that elapsed before the accounts we now possess were written. These considerations rather enhance the value of both sets of our materials. It is more wonderful that so much of what appears to be the truth should have been preserved, than that the stories should not conform in every particular.

However questionable may be the contemporary existence of Alexander and Sandrocopius, there is no reason to doubt

that the latter reigned in the time of Seleucus Nicator, as Strabo and Arrian cite the repeated declarations of Megasthenes, that he had often visited the Indian prince Selencus is said to have relinquished to him some territories beyond the Indus, and to have formed a matrimonial alliance with him. We have no trace of this in the Hindu writers, but it is not at all improbable. Before the Christian era the Hindus were probably not scrupulous about whom they married, and even in modern days, their princesses have become the wives of Mohammedan sovereigns. Chandragupta, however, had no right to be nice with respect to the condition of his wife, and in whichever way the alliance was effected, it was feasible enough, whilst it was a very obvious piece of policy in Chandragupta, as calculated to give greater security to his empire and stability to his reign. The failure of Seleucus in his attempt to extend his power in India, and his relinquishment of territory, may possibly be connected with the discomfiture and retreat of Malayaketu, as narrated in the drama, although it may be reasonably doubted whether the Syrian monarch and the king of Magadha ever came into actual collision. It is very unlikely that the former ever included any part of the Punjab within his dominions, and at any rate it may be questioned, whether Chandragupta or his posterity long retained if they ever held possession of the north-western provinces, as there is no conjecturing any resemblance between the names of the Maurya princes (*As. Res.* vol. ix table) and the Amitrochates and Sophagases, who reinforced the armies of Antigonus the son of Selencus, and of Antigonus the

to the general position of the people over whom Chandragupta reigned.

Finally, the classical authors concur in making Palibothra, a city on the Ganges, the capital of Sandrocoptus. Strabo, on the authority of Megasthene, states that Palibothra is situated at the confluence of the Ganges and another river, the name of which he does not mention. Arrian, possibly on the same authority, calls that river the Erranoboeas, which is a synonym of the Sone. In the drama, one of the characters describes the trampling down of the banks of the Sone, as the army approaches to Pataliputra; and Pataliputra, also called Kusumapura, is the capital of Chandragupta. There is little question that Pataliputra and Palibothra are the same, and in the uniform estimation of the Hindus, the former is the same with Patna. The alterations in the course of the rivers of India, and the small comparative extent to which the city has shrunk in modern times, will sufficiently explain why Patna is not at that confluence of the Ganges and the Sone; and the only argument, then, against the identity of the position, is the enumeration of the Erranoboeas and the Sone as distinct rivers by Arrian and Pliny; but their nomenclature is unaccompanied by any description, and it was very easy to mistake synonyms for distinct appellations. Rajmahal, as proposed by Wilford, and Bhagalpur, as maintained by Franklin, are both utterly untenable, and the further inquiries of the former had satisfied him of the error of his hypothesis. His death prevented the publication of an interesting paper by him on the site of Palibothra, in which he had come over to the prevailing opinion and shown it to have been situated in the vicinity of Patna.*

It thus appears that the Greek and Hindu writers concur in the name, in the private history, in the political elevation, and in the nation and capital of an Indian king, nearly, if not exactly contemporary with Alexander, to a degree of approximation that cannot possibly be the work of accident; and it may be reasonably concluded, therefore, that the era of the events described in the drama *Mudra-Rakshasa* is determined with as much precision as that of any other remote historical fact.

PALANKIK ACCOUNTS OF CHANDRAGUPTA

The son of Mahanandin, born of a Sudra woman, a powerful prince named Mahapadma, shall put an end to the Kshattriya rule, and from his time the kings will be mostly Sudras void of piety. He will bring the earth under one umbrella, his rule being irresistible, and he will reign like another Bhargava. He will have eight sons, Sumalya and others, who will be kings of the earth for one hundred years. A Brahman will destroy these nine Nandas, and after their disappearance the Manavas will

* *Asiatic Researches*, vol. xiv. p. 380.

reign in the Kali age. That Brahman will inaugurate Chandragupta as king.—(*Bhagavata-Purana*, 12th Skandha.) ..

Mahanandin will be the last of the ten Saisnaga princes, whose joint reigns will be three hundred and sixty-two years. The son of Mahanandin or Nanda, named Mahapadma, will be born from a Sudra mother. He will be avaricious, and like another Parasurama, will end the Kshattriya race, as from him forwards the kings will be all Sudras. He, Mahapadma, will bring the whole earth under one umbrella, his rule being irresistible. He will have eight sons, Sumalya and others who after him will govern the world. He, and these sons, will reign for a period of one hundred years, until Kautilya, a Brahman, shall destroy the nine Nandas.

After their destruction the Mauryas will possess the earth, Kautilya inaugurating Chandragupta in the kingdom.—*Vishnu-Purana*.

The comment explains Maurya thus —so named from Chandragupta, the first, who derived this name from his mother Mura, one of the wives of Nanda.

STORY OF NANDA, AS RELATED BY VARARUCHI
IN THE "VIBHAT-KATHA"

I now returned from my sojourn in the snowy mountains, where by the favour of Siva I had acquired the Paniniya grammar. This I communicated to my preceptor Varsha, as the fruit of my penance; and as he wished to learn a new system, I instructed him in that revealed by Swami-Kumara. Vyadi and Indradatta then applied to Varshá for like instructions, but he desired them first to bring him a very considerable present. As they were wholly unable to raise the sum, they proposed applying for it to the king, and requested me to accompany them to his camp, which was at that time at Ayodhya; I consented, and we set off.

When we arrived at the encampment we found everybody in distress, Nanda being just dead. Indradatta, was skilled in magic, said: "This event need not disconcert us: I will transmute my vitality into the lifeless body of the king. Do you Vararuchi, then solicit the money: I will grant it, and then resume my own person, of which do you, Vyadi, take charge till the spirit returns." This was assented to, and our companion accordingly entered the carcase of the king.

STORY OF YOGANANDA

The revival of Nanda caused universal rejoicing. The minister Sakatela alone suspected something extraordinary in the resurrection. As the heir to the throne, however, was yet a child, he was well content that no change should take place.

and determined to keep his new master in the royal station. He immediately, therefore, issued orders that search should be made for all the dead bodies in the vicinage, and that they should forthwith be committed to the flames. In pursuance of this edict the guards came upon the deserted carcase of Indradatta and burning it as directed, our old associate was compelled to take up his abode permanently in the tenement which he had purposed to occupy but for a season. He was by no means pleased with this change, and in private lamented it with us, being in fact degraded by his elevation, having relinquished the exalted rank of a Brahman for the inferior condition of a Sudra.

Vyadi having received the sum destined for our master, took leave of his companion Indradatta, whom we shall henceforth call Yogananda. Before his departure, however, he recommended to the latter to get rid of Sakatala, the minister, who had penetrated his secret, and who would no doubt, raise the prince Chandragupta to the throne as soon as he had attained to years of discretion. It would be better, therefore, to anticipate him, and as preparatory to that measure, to make me Vararuchi, his minister. Vyadi then left us, and in compliance with his counsel I became the confidential minister of Yogananda.

A charge was now made against Sakatala, of having, under pretence of getting rid of dead carcases, burned a Brahman alive; and on this plea he was cast into a dry well with all his sons. A plate of parched pulse and a pitcher of water were let down daily for their sustenance, just sufficient for one person. The father, therefore, recommended to the brothers to agree amongst themselves which should survive to revenge them all, and relinquishing the food to him, resign themselves to die. They instantly acknowledged their avenger in him, and with stern fortitude refusing to share in the daily pittance, one by one expired.

After some time Yogananda, intoxicated like other mortals with prosperity, became despotic and unjust. I found my situation therefore most irksome, as it exposed me to a tyrant's caprice, and rendered me responsible for acts which I condemned. I therefore sought to secure myself a participator in the burthen, and prevailed upon Yogananda to release Sakatala from his captivity, and reinstate him in his authority. He therefore once again became the minister of the king.

It was not long before I incurred the displeasures of Yogananda, so that he resolved to put me to death. Sakatala, who was rejoiced to have this opportunity of winning me over to his cause, apprised me of my danger, and helped me to evade it by keeping me concealed in his palace. Whilst thus retired, the son of the king, Hiranyagnpta, lost his senses and Yogananda now lamented my absence. His regret moved Sakatala to acknowledge that I was living, and I was once more received

into favour. I effected the cure of the prince, but received news that disgusted me with the world, and introduced me to resign my station and retire into the forests. My disappearance had led to a general belief that I had been privately put to death. This report reached my family. Upakosa, my wife, burned herself, and my mother died broken-hearted.

Inspired with the profoundest grief, and more than ever sensible of the transitory duration of human happiness. I repaired to the shades of solitude and the silence of meditation. After living for a considerable period in my hermitage, the death of Yogananda was thus related to me by a Brahman, who was travelling from Ayodhya and had rested at my cell.

Sakatala, brooding on his plan of revenge, observed one day a Brahman of mean appearance digging in a meadow, and asked him what he was doing there. Chinakya, the Brahman, replied "I am rooting out this grass which has hurt my foot." The reply struck the minister as indicative of a character which would contribute to his designs, and he engaged him by the promise of a large reward and high honours to come and preside at the *Sraddha*, which was to be celebrated next new moon at the palace. Chanakya arrived, anticipating the most respectful treatment; but Yogananda had been previously persuaded by Sakatala to assign precedence to another Brahman, Sibandhu, so that when Chanakya came to take his place he was thrust from it with contumely. Burning with rage, he threatened the king before all the court, and denounced his death within seven days. Nanda ordered him to be turned out of the palace. Sakatala received him into his house, and persuading Chanakya that he was wholly innocent of being instrumental to his ignominious treatment, contributed in encourage and inflame his indignation. Chanakya thus protected, practised a magical rite, in which he was a proficient, and by which on the seventh day Nanda was deprived of life. Sakatala, on the father's death, effected the destruction of Hiranyakupta, his son, and raised Chandragupta, the son of the genuine Nanda, to the throne. Chanakya became the prince's minister; and Sakatala having attained the only object of his existence, retire to end his days in the woods.

STORY OF NANDA AND CHANDRAGUPTA
BY A PANDIT OF THE DEKHIN

(From a manuscript in the collection of the late
Col. MacKenzie, Sanskrit, Telenga character)

After invoking the benediction of Ganesa, the writer proceeds. In the race of Bharadwaja, and the family of the hereditary councillors of the Bhosala princes, was born the illustrious and able minister Bhavaji. He was succeeded by his son Gang-

dhara, surnamed Adhwaryu (a priest of the *Yajur-Veda*), who continued to enjoy the confidence of the king, and was equal to Vrihaspati in understanding.

By his wife Krishnambika, Gangadhara had two sons, who were both employed by the Raja Sahnji, the son of the preceding prince. The favour of the Raja enabled these ministers, to grant liberal endowments to pious and learned Brahmins.

The elder of the two, Nrisimha, after a life passed in prayer and sacred rites, proceeded to the world of Brahma, leaving three sons.

Of these, the elder was Ananda-Raja Adhwaryu. He was noted for his steadiness and sagacity from the childhood, and in adult years deserved the confidence of his prince Sahuji. He was profoundly versed in the Vedas, a liberal benefactor of the Brahmins, and a skilful director of religious rites.

Upon his death and that of the youngest brother the survivor, Tryambaka Adhwaryu succeeded to the reputation of his ancestors, and cherished his nephews as his own children. Accompanied by his mother he proceeded to the shores of the Ganges, and by his ablutions in the holy stream liberted his ancestors from the ocean of future existence.

He was solicited by Sahu, the king, to assume the burthen of the state, but regarding it incompatible with his religious duties he was unwilling to assent. In consideration of his wisdom and knowledge he was highly venerated by the Raja, and presented with valuable gifts, which he dedicated to pious rites or distributed to the Brahmins. Having on a particular occasion been lavish of expenditure, in order to gratify his sovereign, he contracted heavy debts, and as the prince delayed their liquidation he was obliged to withdraw to seek the means of discharging them. On his return he was received by Sahu and his nobles with high honours and the prince, by the homage paid to him, obtained identification (after death) with Tyagesa, a glory of difficult attainment to Yajati, Nata, Mandhatri, and other kings.

The brother of the prince, Sarabhaji, then governed the kingdom and promoted the happiness of all entrusted to his care by Sahu, for protection of piety and rendering the people happy by his excellent qualities, the chief of the Brahmins is treated by him with increased veneration.

The land of Chola is supplied at will by the waters of the Kaveri maintained by the abundant showers poured down constantly by Indra; and in this land did not illustrious Sarabhaji long exercise undisturbed dominion and promote the happiness of his people.

Having performed with the aid of his reverend minister the late rite to his brother, he liberally delivered Tryambaka from the ocean of debt, and presented him with lands on the bank of

the Kaberi (the Sahyagirija), for the preservation of the obser-vances enjoined by religion and law.

And he diffused a knowledge of virtue by means of the Tantra of the son of the foe of Kama (Kartikeya), as communicated by Brahma to Narada to relieve his distress, and whatever learned man takes up his residence on the hill of Swamin, and worships Skanda with faith, will undoubtedly obtain divine wisdom.

Thus, on the mountain of Swamin, enjoying the favour of Girisa, does Tryambaka reside with uninterrupted prosperity, surrounded by his kinsmen, and sons and grandsons, and Brahmans learned in the Vedas, engaged in the performance of the holy rites and the worship of Iswara. May he live a thousand years !

An object of his unbounded benevolence, and one to be included in those cherished by his bounties, having worshipped the lord of Sri (Vishnu), and acquitted himself of his debt to the Gods and Manes, is rewarded by having it in his power to be respectfully obedient to his (Tryambaka's) commands. This individual, named Dhundhi, the son of the excellent Pandit Lakshmana, of the family of Vyasa, had in his possession, and expounded, the new and wonderful drama entitled the Mudra-Rakshasa, and in order to convey a clear notion of his Drama, the composition of Visakha-Datta, he relates us an introduction the following particulars of the story.

STORY OF NANDA AND CHANDRAGUPTA

According to the Puranas, the Kshatriya sovereignty was to cease with Nanda. In the beginning of the Kali age the Nandas were kings so named.

Amongst them Sarvarthasiddhi was celebrated for his valour ; he was monarch of the earth, and his troops were nine score and one hundred. Vaktranasa and others were his hereditary minister, but amongst them the most famous was the Brahman, Rakshasa.

He was skilled in government and policy, and the six attributes of princes ; was eminent for piety and prowess, and was highly respected by Nanda. The king had two wives, of whom Snnanda was the elder—the other was of Sudra extraction ; she was the favourite of the king, of great beauty and amiable character—her name was Mura. On one occasion the king, in the company of his wives, administered the rites of hospitality to a venerable ascetic, and after washing his feet, sprinkled the queen's with the water ; nine drops fell upon the forehead of the elder, and one on Mura. This she received with reverence, and the Brahman was much pleased with her deportment.

Mura accordingly was delivered of one son, of most ex-

celest qualities, who was named Maurya. Sunanda was delivered of a limp of flesh.

This Rakshasa divided it into nine portions, which he put into a vessel of oil, and carefully watched.

By his care nine infants were in time evolved, who were brought up by Rakshasa, and called the nine Nandas after their progenitor.

The King when he grew old retired from the affairs of state, consigning his kingdom to these nine sons, and appointing Maurya to the command of the army.

Maurya had a hundred sons, of whom Chandragupta was the best, and they surpassed the Nandas in merit.

The Nandas, being therefore filled with envy, conspired against his life, and inviting him and his sons into a private chamber put them to death.

At this time the Raja of Simhala sent to the court of the Nanda a lion of wax in a cage, so well made that it seemed to be alive. And he added this message, 'If any one of your courtiers can make this fierce animal run without opening the cage I shall acknowledge him to be a man of talent.'

The dulness of the Nandas prevented their understanding the purport of the message, but Chandragupta, in whom some little breath yet remained offered, if they would spare his life, to undertake the task and this being allowed, he made an iron rod red hot, and thrusting it into the figure, the wax soon ran, and the lion disappeared.

Although they desired his death, Chandragupta was taken by the Nandas from the pit into which he had been cast, and continued to live in effluence. He was gifted with all the marks of royalty, his arms reached to his knees, he was affable, liberal, and brave, but these deserts only increased the enmosity of the Nandas, and they waited for an opportunity of compassing his death.

Upon one occasion Chandragupta observed a Brahman of such irascible temperament that he tore up violently a tuft of kusa grass, because a blade of it had pierced his foot, on which he approached him, and placed himself under his protection, through fear of incurring the Brahman's resentment.

This Brahman was named Vishnugupta, and was deeply read in the science of government taught by Usanas (Saturn), and in astronomy, his father, a teacher of *riti*, or polity, was named Chanakya, and hence the son is called Chanakya.

He became the great friend of Chandragupta, who related to him all he had suffered from the Nandas.

On which Chanakya promised him the throne of the Nandas and being hungry, entered the dinner chamber, where he seated himself on the seat of honour.

The Nandas, their understanding being bewildered by fate,

regarded him as some wild scholar of no value, and ordered him to be thrust from his seat. The ministers in vain protested against the act; the princes forcibly dragged Chanakya, furious with rage, from his seat.

Then, standing in the centre of the hall, Chanakya, blind with indignation, loosened the lock of hair on the top of his head, and thus vowed the destruction of the royal race:

"Until I have exterminated these hasty and ignorant Nandas, who have not known my worth, I will not again tie up these hairs."

Having thus spoken, he withdrew, and indignantly quitted the city; and the Nandas, whom fortune had deserted, made no attempt to pacify him.

Chandragupta being no longer afraid of his own danger, quitted the city and repaired to Chanakya; and the Brahman Kautilya, possessed of the prince, resorted to crooked expedients for the destruction of the Nandas.

With this view he sent a friend, Indrasarman, disguised as a Kshapanaka, as his emissary, to deceive Rakshasa and the rest, whilst on the other hand he excited the powerful Parvatendra to march with a Mlechchha force against Knumapura, promising him half the kingdom.

The Nandas prepared the encounter the enemy, relying on the valour of Rakshasa. He exerted all his prowess, but in vain; and finding it impossible to overcome the hostile force by open arms, attempted to get rid of Maurya by stratagem; but in the meantime all the Nandas perished like moths in the flame of Chanakya's revenge, supported by the troops of Parvatendra.

Rakshasa, being worn in body and mind, and having lost his troops and exhausted his treasures, now saw that the city could no longer be defended; he therefore effected the secret retreat of the old king, Sarvarthasiddhi, with such of the citizens as were attached to the cause of the Nandas, and then delivered the capital to the enemy, affecting to be won to the cause of Chandragupta.

He prepared by magic art a poisoned maid, for the destruction of that prince, but Kautilya detected the fraud, and diverting it to Parvatesa, caused his death; and having contrived that information of his share in the murder of the monarch should be communicated to his son, Malayaketu, he filled the young prince with alarm for his own safety, and occasioned fight from the camp.

Kautilya, though master of the capital, yet knowing it contained many friends of Nanda, hesitated to take possession of it; And Rakshasa, taking advantage of the delay, contrived, with Daruvarman and others, machines and various expedients to destroy Chandragupta upon his entry; but Kautilya discovered and frustrated all his schemes.

He persuaded the brother of Parvateswara, Vairodhaka, to suspend his departure, affirming with solemn asseverations, that Rakshasa, seeking to destroy the friends of Chandragupta, had designed the poisoned maid for the mountain monarch. Thus he concealed his own participation in the act; and the crafty knave deceived the prince, by promising him that moiety of the kingdom which had been promised to his brother.

Sarvarthasiddhi retired to the woods to pass his days in penance, but the cruel Kantilya soon found means to shorten his existence.

When Rakshasa heard of the death of the old king, he was much grieved, and went to Malayaketu and roused him to revenge his father's death. He assured him that the people of the city were mostly inimical to Chaudragupta, and that he had many friends in the capital ready to co-operate in the downfall of the prince and his detested minister. He promised to exhaust all his own energies in the cause, and confidently anticipated Malayaketu's becoming master of the kingdom, now left without a legitimate lord. Having thus excited the ardour of the prince, and foremost himself in the contest, Rakshasa marched against Maurya with an army of Mlechchhas or barbarians.

This is the preliminary course of the story. The subject of the drama begins with an equivocal upon the words Kruragraha, in the dialogue of the preludo.

EXTRACTS FROM CLASSICAL WRITERS RELATING TO THE HISTORY OF SANDRACOTTUS

He (Alexander) had learned from Phigaus that beyond the Indus was a vast desert of twelve days' journey, and at the farthest borders thereof ran the Ganges. Beyond this river dwell the Tabresians, and the Gandarite, whose king's name was Xandrames, who had an army of 20,000 horse, 200,000 foot, 2000 Chariots and 4000 elephants. The king could not believe this to be true, and sent for Porus, and inquired of him whether it was so or not. He told him all was certainly true, but that the present king of the Gandarites was but of a mean and obscure extraction, account to be a barber's son; for his father being a very handsome man, the queen fell in love with him, and murdered her husband, and so the kingdom devolved upon the present king.—Diodorus Siculus.

At the confluence of the Ganges and another river is situated Palibothra; it is the capital of the Prasii, a people superior to others. The king, besides his birth name and his appellation from the city, is also named Sandracottus. Megasthenes was sent to him.

Megasthenes relates that he visited the camp of Sandracottus, in which 400,000 people assembled.

Seleucus Nicator relinquished the country beyond the Indus to Sandracottus, receiving in its stead fifty elephants, and contracting an alliance with that prince (*cotracta cum eo affinitate*)—Strabo.

Phegelas informed him, that eleven days from the river the road lay over vast deserts to the Ganges, the largest stream in India, the opposite bank of which the Gangaridoe and Parrhesii inhabited. Their king was named Aggramen, who could bring into the field 20,000 horse and 200,000 foot, 2,000 chariots and 3000 elephants. As these things appeared incredible to the king, he referred to Porus, who confirmed what he heard. He added, however, that the king was not only of low, but of extremely base origin, for his father was a barber, whose personal merits recommended him to the queen. Being introduced by her to the King then reigning, he contrived his death, and under pretence of acting as guardian to his sons, got them into his power and put them to death. After their extermination he begot the son who was now king, and who, more worthy of his father's condition than his own, was odious and contemptible to his subjects.—Quintus Curtius..

Megasthenes tells us he was at the court of Sandracottus.

The Capital of India is Palembothra, on the confines of the Prasii, where is the confluence of the two great rivers, Erranobas and Ganges. The first is inferior only to the Indus and Ganges.

Megasthenes assures us he frequently visited Sandracottus, king of India.—Arrian.

Sandracottus was the author of the liberty of India after Alexander's retreat, but soon converted the name of liberty into servitude after his success, subjecting those whom he rescued from foreign dominion to his own authority. This prince was of humble origin, but was called to royalty by the power of the gods; for, having offended Alexander by his impudent language, he was ordered to be put to death, and escaped only by flight. Fatigued with his journey, he laid down to rest, when a lion of large size came and licked off the perspiration with his tongue, retiring without doing him any harm. The prodigy inspired him with ambitious hopes, and collecting bands of robbers, he roused the Indians to renew the empire. In the wars which he waged with the captains of Alexander, he was distinguished in the van, mounted on an elephant of great size and strength. Having thus acquired power, Sandracottus reigned at the same time that Seleucus laid the foundation of his dominion; and Seleucus entered into a treaty with him, and settling affairs on the side of India, directed his march against Antigonus.—Justin 15-4.

The kings of the Gandarities and Prasians were said to be waiting for them there (on the Ganges) with 80,000 horse,

200,000 foot, 6,000 Chariots and 6,000 elephants. Nor is this number at all magnified, for Androcottus, who reigned not long after, made Seleucus a present of 500 elephants at one time, and with an army of 600,000 men traversed India and conquered the whole.

Androcottus, who was then very young, had a sight of Alexander, and he is reported to have said that Alexander was within a little of making himself master of those countries; with such hatred and contempt was the reigning prince looked upon, on account of his profligacy of manner and meanness of birth.—Plutarch, "Life of Alexander."

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The peculiarities of the play *Mudra Rakshasa*, have already been adverted to. It is a historical or political drama, and represents a curious state of public morals, in which fraud and assassination are the simple means by which inconvenient obligations are acquitted, and troublesome friends or open enemies removed. It is not, however, that such acts are not held in themselves as crimes, or that their perpetrators, if instigated by vulgar vice or ferocity, are not condemned as culprits; it is only when the commission of the crime proposes a political end that it is represented as venial, and is compatible with the possession of great virtues, and even with an amiable character. The principle is one which has long pervaded Asiatic courts, and has proved no unimportant instrument in working their downfall.

In delineating the operation of this system, the author of the drama has evinced considerable dexterity, and has contrived to invest his chief personages with interest and dignity; an effect produced, in a great measure, by showing them wholly unmindful of personal advantage. Chanakya has to fulfil a vow, but, that accomplished, relinquishes rank and power; and Rakshasa, whilst he pursues Chandragupta with hostility, seeks only to revenge the death of his former sovereign, without the thought of acquiring fortune or dignity for himself.

The author has also been fortunate in the delineation of these two statesmen, who although of the same depraved school of politics, are of very different characters. Chanakya is violent and inexorable; Rakshasa gentle and relenting. Chanakya's ruling principle is pride of caste; Rakshasa's attachment to his friends and sovereign. Chanakya revenges wrongs done to himself; Rakshasa, those offered to them he loves. Chanakya with his impetuous passions combines deep design; Rakshasa, notwithstanding his greater temperance, is a hanger in contrivance and a better soldier than a plotter.

Another redeeming feature in Hindu treachery is devoted to an employer. Although some of the personages can-

not help expressing a disgust for the duty havo to discharge, they never think of betraying their trust ; and they never intimate any relaxation of purpose, although treated with indignity or blows.

The plot of the drama singularly conforms to one of the unities, and the occurrences are all subservient to one action, the conciliation of Rakshasa. This is never lost sight of from first to last, without being made unduly prominent. It may be difficult, in the whole range of dramatic literature, to find a more successful illustration of this rule.

The conduct of the action is open to some objections, but rather on the score of stage management than dramatic probability. The chain of evidence by which Rakshasa is separated from Malayakoti is ingeniously connected.

The succession of incidents is active and interesting although women form no part of the *Dramatis Personæ*, except in the episodical introduction of Chandana-Dasa's wife, a peculiarity that would be scarcely thought possible in the dramatic literature of Europe.

The author of the *Mudra-Rakshasa* was not a poet of the sphere of Bhavabhuti or Kalidasa. His imagination rises not to their level, and there is scarcely a brilliant or beautiful thought in the play. As some equivalent for the want of imagination, he has a vigorous perception of character, and a mainly strain of sentiment, that the inferior only to elevated conception and delicate feeling. He is the Massinger of the Hindus.

The language of the original partakes of the general character of the play ; it is rarely beautiful or delicate, but always vigorous, and occasionally splendid.

RATNAVALI OR THE NECKLACE

The *Ratnavali* is a play of a different character from any of those which we have hitherto examined. Although the personages are derived from Hindu history, they are wholly of mortal mould, and unconnected with any mystical or mythological legend ; and the incidents are not only the pure inventions of the poet, but they are of an entirely domestic nature. In this latter respect the *Ratnavali* differs from the *Mricchhakati*, *Malati* and *Madhava*, and *Mudra Rakshasa*, whilst its exemption from legendary allusion distinguishes it from the *Vikramorvashi* and *Uttara-Rama-Charitra*.

Although, however, the *Ratnavali* differs from its predecessors in these respects, and in others of still greater importance, it is well entitled to attention, as establishing an era in the history of both Hindu manners and literature, of which we are able to fix the date with precision.

The story of this drama appears to have been not wholly

the invention of the author, but to have enjoyed very extensive popularity, at a period to which we cannot refer with confidence. The loves of Vatsa, prince of Kansamhi, and Vasavadatta, princess of Ujjayini, are alluded to in the *Megha-Dutta*, and are narrated in the *Vrikhat-Katha* of Soma-Deva. The last is a writer of the same period as the drama, but he does not pretend to have invented the story; and the manner in which the tale is adverted to* in the *Megha-Dutta*, the date of which work is unknown, but which is no doubt anterior to the *Vrikhat-Katha*, seems to indicate a celebrity of some antiquity.** The second marriage of Vatsa, which forms the business of the *Ratnavali*, appears to be the invention of the writer, as it is very differently told in the *Vrikhat-Katha*; the heroine being there named Padmavati, and being a princess of Magadha, not of Ceylon. The circumstances under which the marriage is effected are altogether distinct.***

From whatever source, however, the plot of the drama may have been derived, it is very evident that the author is under considerable obligation to his predecessors, and especially to Kalidasa, from the *Vikrama* and *Urvasi*, of which writer several situations, and some of the dialogue even, are borrowed. At the same time, the manners described are very different, and the light and loose principles of Vatsa are wholly unlike the deep dignified passion of Pururavas. If we compare the *Ratnavali* with the *Mricchhakati*, or with the dramas of Bhavabhuti, the difference is still more striking, and it is impossible to avoid the conviction, that they are the productions of different ages, and different conditions of society; the *Ratnavali* indicating a wider deviation from manners purely Hindu, more artificial refinement, and more luxurious indulgence, and a proportionate deterioration of moral feeling.

The *Ratnavali*, considered also under a purely literary point of view, marks a change in the principles of dramatic composition, as well as in those of social organization. Besides the want of passion and the substitution of intrigue, it will be very evident

*The author terms Avanti or "Ougein", great with the number of those versed in the tale of Udayana (Vatsa).

**The Vasava-Datta of Subandhu, the nephew of Vararuchi, and as well as his uncle patronized by Bhoja, has nothing in common with the story of Vatsa and his bride, except the name of the latter. The *Megha-Dutta*, therefore, does not refer to this work. Subandhu also alludes to the *Vrikhat-Katha*, to which he is consequently subsequent.

***The story is translated from the *Vrikhat-Katha*, in the *Quarterly Oriental Magazine*, Calcutta, Vol. ii. p. 198 (See H.H. Wilson's works, vol. III, edited by Dr. R. Rost; p. 228ff).

that there is in it no poetic spirit, no gleam of inspiration, scarce even enough to suggest a conceit in the ideas. The only poetry of the play, in fact, is mechanical. The structure of the original language is eminently elegant, particularly in the Prakrit. This dialect appears to equal advantage in no other drama, although much more laboured in the *Malati* and *Malhava*; the Sanskrit style is also very smooth and beautiful without being painfully elaborate. The play is, indeed, especially interesting on this account, that whilst both in thought and expression there is little fire or genius, a generally correct and delicate taste regulates the composition, and avoids those absurdities which writers of more pretension than judgment, the writers of more recent periods, invariably commit. The *Ratnarali*, in short, may be taken as one of the connecting links between the old and new school; as a not unpleasing production of that middle region through which Hindu poetry passed from elevation to extravagance.

The place to which the *Ratnarali* is entitled in the dramatic literature of the Hindus is the more interesting as the date is verifiable beyond all reasonable doubt. It is stated in the prelude to be the composition of the sovereign Sri-Harsha-Deva. A king of this name, and a great patron of learned men, reigned over Kashmir: he was the reputed author of several works, being however, in fact only the patron, the compositions bearing his name being written, the author of the *Karya-Itihasa* asserts, by Dhavaka and other poets. That it was fashionable in his reign to make the adventures of the Vatsa for the subject of fictitious narrative, we may infer from their being the groundwork of the *Vishat-Katka*, the author of which was a native of Kashmir; and a contemporary of the prince. Soma-deva, the author, states that he compiled his collection of tales for the amusement of the grandmother of Harsha-Deva, king of Kashmir, the son of Kalasa, the son of Ananta, the son of Samgrama. His genealogy is nearly identifiable with that of Abulfazl, which runs in Gladwin's translation of the *Ayeen Akbari* (Vol. ii, p. 154), Sungram, Hurray, Anant, Kulussder, Ugruss, Hurruss. The two additional princes, Hurray and Ugruss, reigned conjointly but forty-four days, and they are for all chronological purposes non entities.* But we have fortunately a better authority than either of the preceding, in the history of Kashmir by Kalhana-Pandit. The first portion of this work, down to the reign of Samgrama-Deva, in A.D. 1027, is translated summarily in the fifteenth volume of the *Asiatic Researches*. Since its publication, the subsequent portion of the original has been procured in Kashmir, and presented to

* See also the *Quarterly Oriental Magazine* for March 1824 p. 64 (See H. H. Wilson's works, iii. p. 158).

the Asiatic Society by the late enterprising traveller, Moorcroft. From this we are enabled to trace the successors of Samgrama with precision.

Samgrama reigned twenty-five years, and was succeeded by his son Hari, who enjoyed his elevation, but twenty-two days, having been removed, it was supposed, by the practices of his mother, who aspired to the regency during the minority of a younger son. She was set aside by the chief officers of the state, under whose ministry Ananta, the next prince, reigned interruptedly fifty-three years, when he was succeeded by his son Kalasa. Kalasa reigned eight years, and being displeased with his son, Harsha, left the crown to a kinsman, Utkarsha. That prince, however, enjoyed his authority but twenty-two days having been defeated and invested in his palace, by the partisans of the legitimate heir, and putting an end to his existence rather than fall into their hands. Harsha succeeded. He consequently ascended the throne A.D. 1113; and the play must have been written between that date and A.D. 125, the termination of his reign. No mention is made of the composition by the author of the history; but he dwells at much length, and with some acrimony, on Harsha's patronage of poets, players, and dancers and the prince's converseancy with different dialects and elegant literature. Harsha's propensities, indeed, were not likely to be regarded with a favourable eye by a Brahmanical historian, for, in order to defray the expenses into which he was led by them, he made free with the treasures of the temples, and applied their gold and silver vessels and even the images of the gods, to his necessities. These measures, and others of an equally imprudent character, distracted the latter period of his reign with civil broils, and he perished in an insurrection which transferred the crown to a different dynasty. This date thus assigned for the composition refers to a period which Mohammedan history and Hindu literature sufficiently establish, as pregnant with important changes in the poetical situation and national character of the peoples of Hindusthan.

The *Ratnavali* has been translated in prose for the same reasons that the preceding dramas have been rendered in measured language; the fitness of the vehicle for the thoughts, and adaptation of the style to the pitch of the original ideas. Prose would have done scant justice to the merits of Kalidasa or Bhavabhuti, for with them it would have had too translate lofty imaginings; it is perfectly applicable to the level conceptions of Sri Harsha. It may also form a not unacceptable variety, and it may likewise serve to convey some idea, how far the translator may be suspected of widely deviating from his text in the preceding dramas.

There is but little occasion to offer any additional remarks on the *Ratnavali*; It is chiefly valuable as a picture of Hind

manners in a sphere of life secluded from common observation, and at a period of some antiquity. The manners depicted are not influenced by lofty principle or profound reflection, but they are mild, affectionate, and elegant. It may be doubted whether the *haranis* of other eastern nations either in ancient or modern times, would afford materials for so favourable a delineation.

The story is romantic, the incidents are well contrived, the situations are eminently dramatic, and although the spectator is let into the secret of the plot from the beginning, the interest is very successfully maintained. The intrigue corresponds perfectly with the definition given by Schlegel : it is the union of unexpected combinations, resulting from the contending operation of accidental occurrences and premeditated designs.

In the circumscribed limits of the action, we have no right to expect much contrast or development of character, and it is enough that all the individuals introduced preserve their identity. This is true even of the chambermaids ; and the obliging confidante of the heroine is distinguishable from the termagant adviser of the queen.

The merits of the language have already been the subject of remark. Its poetry is merely mechanical : we have no fanciful illustration, nor novel and beautiful similitudes ; neither do any sentiments worthy of notice occur, except the generous remark made by Vatsa on the death of the king of Kosala.

The belief in vulgar magic, or common conjuring, which is repeatedly expressed in the drama, is worthy of remark, as it is something new. The supernatural powers described in *Malati* and *Madhava* are of a very different description from the art that makes a flower blossom out of season, or covers a building with illusory flame.

CHAPTER VIII

SHORT ACCOUNTS OF DIFFERENT DRAMAS

The dramas noticed in the preceding chapters are the most celebrated specimens of the Hindu theatre, and deserve the distinction. They are the best. Of the number which remain, some have considerable merit, although inferior to those which have been translated ; but a considerable portion would have ill repaid the labour of rendering them into the English language.

In order, however, to leave as little doubt as possible on this subject, as well as to furnish as extensive a view as practicable of the theatre of the Hindus, all the specimens, procurable have been pursued with greater or less care, and an outline, proper-

tionably extended, given of their purport, with translation of a few occasional passages, and such verifications of their literary history as could be discovered. The real extent and value of the dramatic literature of the Hindus will now, it is hoped, be accurately appreciated.

MAHAVIRA CHARITA
A Drama In Seven Acts

The characters of the *Mahavira Charita* sufficiently explain its general subject. It is the same with the *Ramayana*, or the adventures of Rama commencing in the play with his visit to Viswamitra's hermitage, and ending in his return to Ayodhya. The course of the story is much the same in the play as in the poem although there are a few variations in some of the details and the story is much more compressed.

That the *Mahavira Charita* is the composition of Bhavabhuti, we have not only the usual assurance in the prelude and the concurrence of general belief, but the evidence of internal structure. The same loftiness of sentiment, excellence of picturesque description, and power of language which mark the *Uttara Rama Charitra* and *Malati Madhava*, are the characteristics of the *Vira Charitra*. If the style is less harmonious and the expression of tender feelings less frequent than in either of the other dramas the difference in these respects is to be regarded as designed, for the three plays of our poet are written upon the principle adopted by the only great dramatist of our own day, the authoress of "Basil and De Montfort," and may be considered as "Plays of the Passions," the characteristic sentiment of the *Uttara Rama Charitra* being the *karuna rasa* or tenderness, that of the *Malati Madhava* the *stringara rasa* or love, and that of the *Vira Charitra* the *vira rasa* or heroism. Consistently with this latter purpose, the situations and sentiments of the drama are of a stirring and martial description, and the language is adapted with singular felicity to the subjects from which it springs. It is sonorous and masculine, more vigorous than musical, and although highly elaborate, and sometimes turgid is in general chaste, and always classical and stately.

The drama opens with an address to the supreme light the one and indivisible pure eternal, and invariable God. The occasion of the performance is then stated to be as usual with this author's dramas the festival of Kalapriyanatha supposed to be the celebrated Omkareswara of Ujjayin. we have also the usual account of the family of Bhavabhuti.

The prologue contains this peculiarity, that the actor communicates to the audience the outline of the story introductory to the business of the drama and announces the entrance of

Kusadhwaja with his two nieces, Sita and Urmila Kusadhwaja* the brother of Janaka, is called king of Sankasya, and with the two girls enters the hermitage of Viswamitra on the borders of the Kausiki (Cosi), having been invited by the Muni**. He is met by the sage with the two youths Rama and Lakshmana, and the young persons become mutually enamoured. Whilst engaged in conversation a messenger from Ravana arrives, who has followed them from Mithila, and comes to demand Sita as a wife for his master. They are further disturbed by Taraka, a female fiend, the daughter of Suketu, wife of Sunda and mother of Maricha. Rama, by command of Viswamitra, destroys her. Viswamitra then invokes the heavenly weapons, who attend, and pledge their services to Rama whenever called upon, and the sage recommends Kusadhwaja to invite the bow of Siva for Rama's present trial, and consequent obtaining of Sita. The bow arrives, self-conveyed, being, as the weapon of so great a deity, pregnant with intelligence. This faculty does not, however, preserve it entire, for Rama snaps it asunder behind the scene, in consequence of which feat it is agreed that Sita shall be wedded to him, Urmila, her sister, to Lakshmana, and Mandavi and Srutakirti, the daughters of Kusadhwaja, to Bharata and Satrughna. The party is again disturbed by Subahu and Marieha, two demons, who are slain by Lakshmana and Rama. The saint and his visitors then retire into the hermitage.

The second act opens with a dialogue between Malayavat, the minister and maternal grandfather of Ravana, and the demon's sister, Surpanakha, who have heard the news from Siddhasrama, and discuss the consequences with some apprehension. A letter arrives from Parasurama, partly requesting and partly commanding Ravana to call off some of his imps who are molesting the sages in Dandakaranya. He writes from Maherdra-Dwipa. Malayavat takes advantage of this to instigate a quarrel between the two Ramas, anticipating that Parasurama, who is the pupil of Siva will be highly incensed when he hears of Rama's breaking the bow of that divinity. The scene then shifts rather abruptly to Videha, the palace of Janaka, to which Parasurama has come to defy the insulter of his god and preceptor. He enters the interior of the palace, the guards and attendants being afraid to stop him, and calls upon Rama to show himself. The young hero is introduced, as proud of Parasurama's seeking him and anxious for the encounter, but detained awhile by Sita's terrors.

* Buchanan makes him the son of Sriradhwaja. The *Vishnu Purana* however says, "brother", and calls him king of Kasi: the *Agni-Purana* says also, "young brother of Janaka".

** The presence of the damsels is not a singularity all the Rishis invited to the same, it is afterwards stated are there with their wives and children.

at last the chiefs meet. The dialogue contains some interesting and curious mythological allusion to the history of Parasurama, who having overcome his fellow pupil, Kartikeya, in a battle-axe fight, received his axe from his preceptor, Siva, as the prize of his prowess. The combat between the two Ramas is suspended by the arrival of Janaka and Satyana, and Rama's being summoned to attend the Kanchana-Mochana—the loosening of Sita's golden bracelet.

As a specimen of the style of the sentiments we may select the following :

Parasurama to Rama

How now ! presumes thou to bend thy bow
 In frowns on me ? Audacious boy, a scion
 Of the vile Kshatriya race, whose tender years,
 And newly-wedded bride, teach me a weakness
 I am not wont to feel Throughout the world
 The story runs, I, Rama, and the son
 Of Jamadagni with remorseless arm
 Struck off a mother's head This vengeful axe
 Has twenty times destroyed the Kshatriya race,
 Not sparing in its wrath the unborn babe
 Hewn piecemeal in the parent womb 'Twas thus
 I slaked the fires of a wronged father's wrath
 With blood, whose torrents drawn unsparingly
 From martial veins, fed the vast reservoir
 In which I love to bathe Enough ! to all
 That—that I am—is known

Rama Give o'er thy vaunts—

I hold thy cruelty a crime, not virtue

In the third act, Parasurama is represented as awaiting Ramachandra's return, and he is accosted in succession by Vasishtha, Viswamitra, Satyanaoda, Janaka, and Dasaratha, who first endeavour to soothe, and then to terrify him, but he out-bullies them all, at last Ramachandra is heard calling on Parasurama and the chief goes off to the combat.

The fourth act opens with the annunciation of Ramachandra's victory, and Malyavat and Surpanakha enter, more alarmed than ever. Malyavat now suggests the scheme of sowing dissension in Dasaratha's family, in order that Rama may be driven forth alone and he thus thrown into the power of the Rakshasas. He discusses various schemes of policy connected with this project, and with that of getting rid of Vibhishana the brother of Ravana and his partisans. He withdraws to put his schemes in execution, and the two kings Janaka and Dasaratha and their holy counsellors succeed, congratulating each other on the victory of Ramachandra. The prince and his defeated foe then appear, and Parasurama is now as humble as he was before arrogant, he calls upon the earth to hide his shame.

Whilst Rama regrets Bhargava's departure, Surbhanakha, disguised as Manthara, the favourite of Kaikeyi, Dasaratha's second wife, arrives with a letter to Rama, requesting him to use his influence with his father to secure Kaikeyi the two boons which Dasaratha was pledged to grant her, specifying one to be her son Bharata's inauguration, and the other, assent to Rama's voluntary exile. In the meantime Dasaratha, who has determined to raise Ramachandra to the participation of regal dignity, communicates his intention to his son. Rama replies by informing him of Kaikeyi's message, and is earnest with his father to accede to her request. Yuddhajit and Bharata arrive, and all are full of wonder and concern, however, as there is no help for it, Dasaratha consents. Lakshmana and Sita are alone to accompany Rama, on which her father Janaka exclaims. "My child what happiness it will be to wait upon thy husband in the hour of trouble, permitted to partake and cheer his wanderings!" Bharata requests permission to go with them, but Rama refuses his assent, on which his brother, with notions very characteristically oriental begs his shoes of him, promising to install them in the kingdom and rule thereafter as their representative. The seniors are led out in deep despondence and Rama with his brother and wife set off to the woods.

The next or fifth act lies in the forests of Dandakaranya, and here Bhavabhuti is himself. There is some turgidity, but considerable magnificence, in the opening dialogue, between the two birds, Jatayu and Sampati, the vulture descendants of Kasyapa, who have seen successive creations. They relate Rama's progress towards the south, and Sampati, the elder, leaves his brother Jatayu with strict injunctions to assist Rama if needed; he then goes to the ocean, and Jatayu to Malaya. He there comes to—

Where, amidst Janasthana's frowning woods,
The tall Prasravana uprears his head,
Dark tinctured in the clouds, and bathes his brow
With thio descending dews, thence through his caves,
He calls the oozing moisture, and sends forth
The pure Godavari to win her way,
Stately and clear, through ancient trees that shade,
Impervious tangling, her majestic course

This descriptive style we find more frequently in the *Uttara Rama-Charitra*: and, as observed in the introduction to that drama, it is characteristic of our author.

Jatayu perches on the mountain and carries on the business of the piece—

Yender I mark the hero in pursuit
Of the swift deer, and thither Laksh

"Directs his course remote. There to the bower,
 A holy scre approaches, and the dame
 Gives him meet welcome. Ha ; his form expands,
 'Tis he, the felon Ravana—his train
 Crowd from the groves : he seizes upon Sita—
 He mounts the car. Shame to thy birth, forbear !
 Await my coming, and the vulture's beak
 Shall rend thy limbs, and revel on thy gore

Jatayu is, however, killed in the conflict, which, with the usual regard to stage decorum, takes place behind the scenes. Lakshmana informs us of his fate, and Rama enters ravisog with indignation. The brothers set off in pursuit of the ravisher, when Sramana, a female devotee sent by Vibhishana to Rama, calls for succour, being seized by Kabandha, headless fiend. Rama sends Lakshmana to her rescue ; he goes off to kill the demon, and returns with the dame. She gives Rama a note from Vibhishana merely complimentary ; but Rama, learning that he is with Sugriva, Hanumat, and other monkey chiefs of Rishyamuka, and that they have picked up some of Sita's ornaments in the forest, determines to go to them. Kabandha then appears, to thank Rama for killing him, being thereby liberated from a curse and restored to a divine condition.

They then proceed towards Rishyamuka, the residence of Bali, watered by the Pampa. Near it is the hermitage of Matanga, with the fire and all things just ready for oblation, although the saint has been long in heaven ; he left them in that state, apparently, as we shall presently see, for the convenience of Rama. When the brothers arrive at the mountain, Bali appears like a cloud upon its peak and descends to the encounter, regretting that he should be compelled by his friendship for Malyavat to destroy Rama. The heroes meet and exchange civilities

Bali. Rama, with wonder and delight I view
 Thy martial bearing.—yet with grief I meet thee
 My eyes were never satiate of thy presence.
 And yet, I mark thy coming with affliction.
 Encugh ! what need of words, Now let the arm,
 That humbled Jamadagni's haughty son,
 Ply thy strong bow again.

Rama. Illustrious chief,
 I thank the fates that grant me thy encounter ;
 Yet must I wave the fight. I cannot wield
 My weapons against one, like thee, unarmed.

Bali. (Smiles) In sooth, brave Kshatriya, I have ill deserved
 Such generous forbearance, but the world
 Knows our high deeds, I need not now proclaim them.

Address thee to the struggle Thou art brave,
 But still a mortal, aod with mortal arms
 Com'st to the field, not such the arms we wield
 Look round the forest, mark these circling hills—
 These are the weapons of our mokey race,
 And well these hands can whirl their pooderous fury
 Come to more level grouod

Rama Lead on, I follow thee

Bnh and Rama (Looking at each other)

The earth will mourn a hero in thy fall [Exeunt]

They go to the coof'ct, the noise brings Vibhishana, Sugriva, and all the monkey chiefs to the place. Bali is overthrown, and returos mortally wounded. He recommends the monkies to choose Sugriva, and his own son Angada, for their joint sovereigns, and mediates an alliance between Rama and them, as well as with Vibhishana. the poet deviating in this, as in many other places, from the Romayana, and exonerating Sugriva from any share in Bali's overthrow. Rama and Sugriva pledge themselves to eternal friendship, over the sacrificial fire in Matanga's hermitage

We call this holy fire the saint prepared
 For saerifice to witness to our vows
 Of friendship ever may thy heart be mine,
 As mine shall ever be devote to thee

Bali then repeats his request to the monkey chiefs, as they were attached to him to ocknowlege Sugriva and Angada as their joint leaders, and to follow them in aid of Roma against Ravana in the ensuing contest, he is theo led off to die, and the act closes

Ma'iyavat, lamenting over these miscarriages, opens the sixth act, and Trijata, a Rakshasi, adds to his despondence by news of the mischief inflicted by Hanumat. he goes off to set guards and gather news. We are then introduced to Ravaoa himself, meditating on his love. His queen Mandodari comes to bring him tidings of Rama's approach, but he only laughs at her. She tells him of the bridge made by Rama, he replies, if all the mountains of the earth were cast into the ocean, they would not furnish footing to cross it. His incredulity is terminated by a general alarm, and the appearance of Prahasta his general, to anocunce that Lanka is invested. Angada comes as envoy from Rama, to commaod Rovana to restore Sita and prostra'e himself and family at the feet of Lakshmana. Ravana, enraged orders some contumely or punishment to be inflicted upon him, which we cannot venture to explain: the expressioo is *Mukha samskara* the cleaning of the face, as if he had ordered him to be shaved. Angada, accordiog to the stage directioo,

pulls his hair out with rage. This part must be dressed in character, an absurdity not without a parallel in the classical drama, in the *Io* of Aeschylus and the *Birds and Wasps* of Aristophanes. The monkey tells Ravana, if he were not an ambassador he would tear off his ten heads and he then springs away, the tumult increases, and Ravana goes forth to the combat. Indra and Chitraratha then come to see the battle and describe its progress. At first the Rakshasas have the worst, but Ravana with his brother Kunibhakarna and his son Meghanada turn the tide, the monkeys fly leaving Rama almost unsupported. Lakshmana attacks Meghanada. Ravana quits Rama to assist his son. Rama kills Kumbhakarna and then goes to the aid of Lakshmana, the whole of Rama's party are then overwhelmed with magic weapons, hurled invisibly by Ravana upon them, and fall senseless. Whilst Ravana seeks to restore Kumbhakarna Hanumat reviving goes to fetch *amrita* and tearing up the mountain that contains it, returns to the field, his very approach restores Lakshmana, who jumps up with increased animation.

As brighter glows the diamond from the lathe
 Or gleams the falchion flashing from its scabbard,
 As starts the serpent from its shrivelled skin,
 Or bursts from envious clouds the lord of day,
 So Raghu's youngest hope, by heavenly herbs
 Restored with more than wonted ardour burns,
 A moment wonders what has chanced, then all
 On fire for glory, rushes to the fight.

Rama also revives, and being instigated by the *Munis* exerts his celestial energies by which the Daitya Ravana and his host speedily perish.

The seventh and last act begins with what the author calls the mixed Vishkanibhaka. The latter means an actor or interpreter who carries on the story, which office is here performed by the tutelary deities of Alaka and Lanka the latter of whom is consoled by the former, who has come to Vibhishana's coronation. We learn amongst other things from them, Sita's passing the fiery ordeal in triumph and Rama's approach with the car of Kuvera, the goddesses therefore disappear. Raghava accompanied by Sita, Lakshmana, Vibhishana and Sugriva then enter and ascend the car which is to transport them to Ayodhya and the progress of which they represent, how, is rather doubtful (*Sarise vamanagatam nurupayanti*). What ensues is more curious than dramatic or interesting although interspersed with some fine passages of picturesque description one or other of the party pointing out the places over which they are supposed to fly. These occur in the following succession the Setu or bridge of

.. The occasion of the performance, which it is usual to mention, is not adverted to, and the manager and actor go off to prepare for an exhibition of song and dance in honour of Krishna's return to the Pandava camp from a visit to the Kaurava princes, as a mediator between the contending chiefs Bhima and Sahadeva, in which the former expresses his refusal to have any share in the negotiations instituted by Krishna, and his determination to make no peace with the enemy until the insult offered to Draupadi is avenged. He expresses his resolution, in case the dispute be amicably adjusted, to disclaim all connexion with his own brothers and throw off obedience to Yudhishthira.

Shall I not grind the Kauravas to dust,
Nor drink the blood of arrogant Duhsasana,
Shall not my mace upon the breast descend
Of proud Suyodhana and crush the wretch,
Because your monarch seeks the price of peace?

The price is the demand of five villages or towns, Indraprastha, Tilaprapstha, Mamsada, Vatavayata, and another ^{tl.} *Mahabharata* gives different names, as Avishala, Vrinasthala and Makandi, the fourth is the same. Sahadeva attempts to calm the fury of Bhima, but in vain, and Draupadi, with her hair still dishevelled, and pining over her ignominious treatment, comes to inflame his resentment. She complains also of a recent affront offered by the queen of Duryodhana, in an injurious comment upon her former exposure, which serves to widen the breach. A messenger now arrives to announce that Krishna's embassy has been unsuccessful and that he has effected his return only by employing his divine powers against the enemy. All the chiefs are summoned by the trumpet to prepare for battle.

Droup Yet ere you go attend to my request,
Let not my shame so far inflame your wrath
That heedless of your lives, you headlong plunge
Into the conflict, the chieftains of the enemy
Are neither rash nor temorous

Bhima True, warrior dame
The sons of Pandu are well skilled to ford
The ocean of the fight amidst whose waves
Floats many a headless corpse, and howling monsters,
Gorged with the sanguine beverage, re-echo
The trumpet's sound. Foremost they lead the troops
O'er crashing cars and dying elephants,
The fierce encounter of whose ponderous brows
Has strewed the floating field with brains and gore

The second act commences before day-break, and introduces Bhanumati, the queen of Duryodhana, repeating to her friend and an attendant, a dream, in which she has beheld a Nakula or Mongoose destroy a hundred snakes. This is very ominous, Nakula being one of the Pandavas, and the sons of Kuru amounting to a hundred. Duryodhana overhears part of her story, and at first imagines the hostile prince is the hero of the vision. He is about to burst upon her full of rage, and when he catches the true import of the tale, he is at first disposed to be alarmed by it, but at last wisely determines to disregard it.

For
By Angiras 'tis sung .

The aspect of the planets, dreams and signs.

Meteors and portents, are the sports of accident,
And do not move the wise

Bhanumati offers an *arkha* of sandal and flowers to the rising sun to avert the ill omen, and then the king appears and soothes her. Their dialogue is disturbed by a rising whirlwind, from which they take shelter in a neighbouring pavilion. The mother of Jayadratha, king of Sindhu, then appears, and apprises Duryodhana that Arjuna has vowed, if sunset finds Jayadratha alive, he will sacrifice himself in the flames. His wrath is especially excited by the death of his son Abhimanyu, in which that chieftain had borne a leading part. Duryodhana laughs at her fears and those of his wife, and despises the resentment of the Pandavas. He observes, that this was fully provoked by the treatment which Draupadi received by his command, when, in the presence of the court and of the Pandavas, she called out in vain for mercy. Duryodhana then orders his war-chariot and goes forth to the battle.

The third act opens with a scene of power, but of bad taste, being full of revolting images. A Rakshasi enters, and expatiates on the stores she has provided for her cannibalism, and that of her partner, and when he makes his appearance, hungry, thirsty, and wearied, she gives him on the stage a feast of flesh and brains, and a refreshing beverage of blood in the skull of an elephant just slain. It appears from their dialogue, that up to the period of the contest, the following chiefs have fallen: Bhagadatta, Sindhuraja, Angadhipa, Drupada, Bhurisravas, Somadatta and Bahlika. Ghatotkacha is also slain, and Bhima is about to avenge his fall on which account Hidimba, the queen of the Rakshasas, and mother of Ghatotkacha, has ordered these goblins to be ready to assist Bhimasena. Whilst engaged in conversion and feeding, this couple see Drona seized by Dhrishtadyumna and slain, and they finally retire before Asvatthaman, the son of Drona, who makes his appearance armed. He is overtaken by his father's charioteer who tells him of the

treachery by which Drona was slain, having been induced to throw away his arms by a false report that his son Aswatthaman had perished and been then killed at a disadvantage. Aswatthaman's distress is assuaged by his maternal uncle, Kripa, who recommends him to solicit the command of the host from Duryodhana. In the meantime, Karna is represented as filling the mind of the Kuru chief with impressions hostile to Drona and his son, persuading him that Drona only fought to secure Aswatthaman's elevation to imperial dignity and that he threw away his life, not out of grief, but in despair at the disappointment of his ambitious schemes. Kripa and Aswatthaman now arrive and Duryodhana professes to condole with Aswatthaman for his father's loss. Karna sincerely asks him what he purposes, to which he replies

What is my purpose? Hear it, king of Anga,
 Whoever confident in arms is ranked
 Amongst the adverse host—whoe'er the race
 Of proud Panchala numbers, active youth,
 Weak age, or babes unborn, whoe'er beheld
 My father's murder, or whoever dares
 To cross my path, shall fall before my vengeance
 Dark is my sight with rage, and death himself,
 The world's destroyer, should not 'scape my fury.
 Pupil of Jamadagnya, Karna, mark me.
 Amidst these very plains, the wrath of Rama,
 Roused by a father's death, filled mighty lakes
 With Kshatriya blood. Such formidable arms,
 Burning for hostile life, I bear, and such
 My cause of rage, a father's fall, nor less
 Than Rama's acts shall Drona's son achieve

Kripa then requests Duryodhana to give the command of the army to Aswatthaman. The king excuses himself on the plea of having promised it to Karna, to whom he transfers his ring accordingly. A violent quartet ensues between Karna and Aswatthaman, and Duryodhana and Kripa have some difficulty in preventing them from single combat. Aswatthaman at last reproaches Duryodhana with partiality, and refuses to fight for him more. They are disturbed by Bhima's proclaiming without, that he has at last encountered Duhsasana, the insulter of Draupadi and is about to sacrifice him to his vengeance. Karna, instigated by Aswatthaman, foregoes his anger, and is about to resume his arms, when a voice from heaven prevents him. He is obliged, therefore to remain an idle spectator of the fight, but desires Kripa to assist the king, they go off for that purpose.

The fourth act opens with Duryodhana's being brought in by his charioteer wounded. Duhsasana has been killed and

the army of the Kauravas put to the rout. On his recovery, the charioteer announces Duhsasana's death, and Duryodhana gives vent to his sorrows. He is joined by Sundaraka, a follower of Karna, who gives in Prakrit a long and tedious account of the conflict between Arjuna and Bhishma, the son of Karna the death of the young prince, and his father's distress, he also brings a leaf on which Karna has written to Duryodhana, with an arrow dipped in his own blood, a message for aid. Duryodhana orders his chariot, and prepares to seek the fight again, when he is prevented by the arrival of his parents Dhritarashtra and Gindhari who with Samjaya commence the fifth act.

The old couple and Samjaya endeavour to prevail upon Duryodhana to sue for peace, but he refuses

My fall has Partha vowed, when he has left
 Me brotherless, and all his brethren slain,
 How shall Duryodhana eodure to live ?
 Nor will I hear of peace until my mace
 Shall crush and scatter to the winds that foe,
 Remorseless Bhima, whose ferocious wrath
 Drank my young brother's brave Duhsasana's blood

A tumult behind, and the entrance of the king's charioteer, announce the death of Karna. Duryodhana, after expressing his grief, determines to go and avenge him, and mounts the car of Samjaya for that purpose, when Arjuna and Bhima arrive in search of him. On finding the seniors there, Arjuna purposes to withdraw, but Bhima insists on first addressing them which they do, but in insulting terms.

Arjuna Parents the middle Pandava salutes you,
 Who to the battle's front has, victor, slain
 The son of Radha he whose pride bebeleth
 The world as grass, and by whose vounted prowess
 Your children hoped to triumph o'er their foes
Bhima Bhima in reverence bows his head to you,
 He, who has overthrown the sons of Kuru,
 He who inebriate has like nectar quaffed
 The blood of vile Duhsasana and soon
 Shall lay the proud Duryodhana in dust

Dhritarashtra reproaching them for this language, is told they use it not in pride, but in requital of his having witnessed without interfering to prevent the oppression and barbarous treatment the Pandavas experienced from his sons. Duryodhana interferes and desies Bhima who is equally anxious for the combat but Arjuna prevents it, and the brothers are called off by a summons from Yudhishtira who orders the battle to cease for the day and the dead bodies of either party to be burnt

Aswatthaman then enters, and is disposed to be reconciled to Duryodhana; but the prince receives his advances coldly, and he withdraws in disgust. Dhritarashtra sends Samjaya after him to persuade him to overlook Duryodhana's conduct. Duryodhana mounts his car, and the aged couple seek the tent of Salya, king of Madra.

In the sixth act Panchala brings to Yudhishthira and Draupadi an account of Duryodhana's having been discovered concealed in a swamp, and compelled to fight with Bhimasena, by whom he will be slain. Yudhishthira orders public rejoicings on the occasion. Charvaka, a Rakshasa disguised as a Muni then enters, requiring rest and water. He tells them that he has seen Arjuna engaged with Duryodhana, Bhima having been previously slain by the latter, and Krishna forcibly taken away by Rama, and gives them to understand that Arjuna also has fallen. Draupadi determines to mount the funeral pile, and Yudhishthira to put an end to himself, when the *Rakshasa*, satisfied with the success of his scheme, which was intended to prevail on this couple to perish, departs. The pile is prepared, and Yudhishthira and Draupadi are about to sacrifice themselves, when they are disturbed by a great clamour. Supposing it to precede the approach of Duryodhana, Yudhishthira calls for his arms, when Bhima, his club smeared with blood, rushes in. Draupadi runs away, he catches her by the hair, and is seized by Yudhishthira—on which the mistake is discovered. The episode is very absurd and impudent.

The braid of Draupadi's hair is now again bound up. Arjuna and Vasudeva arrive, and announce that they have heard of the fraud of the Charvaka, and Yudhishthira adds that the mendicant has been slain by Nakula, on which Krishna expresses great satisfaction. The author has introduced the Charvaka, apparently, merely to have a hit at the atheistical sect, possibly intending the Baudhas.

There is much good writing in this piece, although the style is rather powerful than polished; there is also poetry in the thoughts, but it is the poetry rather of passion than fancy, and the pathos and horror in which it delights are relieved by no brilliancy of illustration; both too are overdone, and the pathos becomes tiresome and the horror disgusting. The chief merit of the drama is individuality of character; the ferocity of Bhima, the pride of Karna, the fiery but kindly temperament of Aswatthaman, and the selfish arrogance of Duryodhana, are well delineated. The chief defect of the play is its undramatic construction. The business is clumsily contrived; the situations are ineffectual or ludicrous; the scenes are awkwardly put together, and much too considerable a portion of the piece is thrown into narrative for the interest to be successfully supported. With the exception of the last defect, the *Veni-Samhara* is calculated to

remind us very forcibly of the early attempts of the French and English dramatists.

There is nothing in the play to furnish a clue to its date. It is frequently cited in the *Kanja Prakasa*, the *Dasa Rupaka*, and *Sahitya Darpana* to which works it is consequently anterior. According to tradition, the author, Bhatta Narayana, was one of the Kanouj Brahmas invited into Bengal by Adi Sura from whom the Brahmins of that province are descended. He was of the Sandilya family. Adi Sura is supposed to have reigned three centuries before our era, but if we may place any dependence on Abulfazal's list of Bengal kings, he was the twenty-second prince in ascent from Ballal Sen, who reigned in the thirteenth century. Assigning then the moderate duration of about three hundred years to these intermediate princes, and admitting the tradition with respect to Bhatta Narayana, the *Veni-Samhara* might have been written about the eighth or ninth century; a period not at all incompatible with the comparative harshness of its style and the rudeness of its execution, particularly if we conclude, agreeably to the tradition that it was amongst the early results of the introduction of Brahminical literature into Bengal. There are considerable varieties in the manuscripts of this drama, and the name is also differently given as the *Veni-Samvarana* or *Veni-Samhara*. The import is the same, "The Binding of the Braid." There is a commentary on the drama, by Jagaddhara, entitled *Mahopadhyaya* implying a teacher—and *Dharmadhikarika*, which may be merely an honorific epithet, although it should signify a judge of administrator of the law.

MALAVIKAGNIMITRA OR AGNIMITRA AND MALAVIKA

A Comedy in Five Acts

The play is usually considered as one of the three composed by Kalidasa, who is thus said in the prelude to be the author.

Manager I have been desired by the assembly to represent *Malvikagnimitra* of Kalidasa at this vernal festival.
Actor Why make such an election? Why should we neglect the works of celebrated writers such as Bhasaka and Saumilla, to perform the play of a contemporary?
Manager Why not? all that is old is not therefore necessarily excellent, all that is new is not despicable on that account alone. Let what is really meritorious, be pronounced so by the candid judge after due investigation, blockheads only are influenced by the opinions of others.

There is no reason to question the nomenclature of the author here, and the play is probably the work of a Kalidasa.

Tradition alone identifies him with the poet of Vikramaditya's reign, who preceded the Christian era and the internal evidence is adverse to the dramas being the work of the author of *Sakuntala* and *Vikrama and Urvashi*. There is neither the same melody to the verse nor fancy in the thoughts. The mention of poets earlier than Kalidasa is of no help as nothing is known of them, their names do not appear in the *Bhoja Prabandha* nor *Sarngadhara Paddhati* two works that enumerate some hundreds of eminent authors. The latter has a Bhasa, which may be the same as Bhasaka, and the former notices a Bhaskara, which might be thought to bear some relation to the same. One manuscript of the play reads in place of Bhasaka Dhavaka, who we know was contemporary with Raja Harsha-Deva, king of Kashmir, the *Kavyn Prakasa* declaring him to be the real author of the works bearing the name of that prince. It is not unlikely, indeed, to have been the work of the time of Sri Harsha, but can scarcely have been the production of a later date, to which Dhavaka had become an ancient writer. The dramas written in more recent periods are invariably as far as is yet known mythological and have some one of the forms or family of Vishnu for the hero. There is no such thing as a decidedly modern drama the business of which is domestic intrigue, such a subject indeed, was wholly incompatible with Hindu feelings as affected by intercourse with their Mohamedan masters whether the effect of that intercourse was terror or imitation. In addition to these considerations, the style of the play is very unlike that most common amongst modern writers and most highly esteemed, being free from all jingle of sounds and from metaphorical commonplace, it does not even affect anything like the uniform smoothness, which seems to have preceded and ushered in the extravagances of modern composition. The piece of sound criticism urged by the manager is also the sentiment of a day long gone by.

There are other considerations corroborative of the conclusion, that this drama is of no recent date, derived from the story of its hero Agnimitra the King of Vidisa, is the son of Pushpamitra, whose father is still alive and who is rather unaccountably termed the Senani or general. The personages are little known to the Pandits of the present day. It appears from the "Vishnu Purana" however, that Pushpamitra was the founder of the Sunga dynasty of Magadha kings having been the general of Brihadratha the last of the Maurya race whom he deposed and put to death he was succeeded by his son Agnimitra and no doubt remains therefore of the identity of the personages. The first of the Maurya race was Chandragupta Whom all research continues to recognise in Sandracottus. The princes of this family were ten in number to whose reigns the reasonable term of one hundred and thirty seven years is assigned in the *Vishnu Purana* which places Agnimitra and his father

his attention to domestic interests, and employs his Vidushaka or confidant, Gautama, to procure him the sight of Malavika.

To effect this, Gautama instigates a quarrel between the professors, Ganadasa and Haradatta, regarding their respective pre-eminence. They appeal to the Raja, who, in consideration of Ganadasa's being patronised by the queen, refers the dispute to her. She is induced to consent reluctantly to preside at a trial of skill between the parties, as shown in the respective proficiency of their select scholars. The queen is assisted by a protegee, a *Pari-rajika*, or female ascetic, and woman of superior learning. In general, a *Parivrajika* denotes an ascetic female of the Baudhha faith, but there is nothing in the piece to assign the character to any particular sect.

The second act opens with the assemblage of the party in the chamber where the performance is to take place, fitted up with the *sangita-rachana*, or orchestral decorations. The king's object is attained, for Ganadasa brings forward Malavika as the pupil on whom he stakes his credit. Malavika sings an *upagana* or prelude, and then executes what is represented as something of extraordinary difficulty, the *chatushpada-rastu*, in the *madhya-laya*, or andante time, which was composed by Sarmishtha. Some air is most probably implied, adapted to a stanza of four *padas* or lines. Sarmishtha is known as the queen

addresses a civil speech to Malavika, when he is interrupted by another pair of listeners, Iravati, the second queen, and her attendant. She commands Malavika's retreat and leaves, the king, in a violent rage, to inform Dharini of what is going forward.

In the beginning of the fourth act the Vidushaka informs the Raja, that Malavika has been locked up in the *Sarabbandhagriha* by the queen. What that chamber is we do not exactly know ; it must be a store or treasure room, and no very enviable place, as the Vidushaka compares it to Patala, the infernal regions. He undertakes, however, to effect her liberation ; and whilst he prepares for his scheme the Raja pays a visit to the queen.

In the next scene, whilst the Raja is engaged in tranquil conversation with Dharini and the Parivrajika, the Vidushaka rushes in, exclaiming he has been bitten by a venomous snake, whilst gathering flowers to bring with him as a present on his visit to the queen, and he exhibits his thumb bound with his cord, and marked with the impressions made by the teeth of the reptile. The Parivrajika, with some humour as well as good surgery, recommends the actual cautery, or the amputation of the thumb ; but the Vidushaka pretending to be in convulsions and dying, the snake-doctor is sent for, who having had his cue, refuses to come, and desires the patient may be sent to him ; the Vidushaka is accordingly sent. The queen is in great alarm, as being, however innocently, the cause of a Brahman's death. Presently the messenger returns, stating the only hope is the application of the snake stone to bite, and requesting the Raja to order one to be procured ; the queen has one in her finger ring, which she instantly takes off and sends to the Vidushaka. This is his object : for the female tailor of Malavika has, as he

daughter has been almost frightened to death by a monkey, and Iravati and the Raja hasten to her assistance, leaving Malavika to the consolation derived from hearing the Asoka tree is in blossom, an omen of the final success of her own desires.

The fifth act collects the Raja, Dharini, the Parivrajika with Malavika and other attendants about the Asoka tree, when some presents arrive from the now submissive monarch of Vidarbha, against whom the troops of Virasena have been successful. Amongst the gifts are two female slaves, who immediately recognise in Malavika the sister of Madhavasena the friend of Agnimitra, whom the armies of the latter have just extricated from the captivity to which the Vidarbha sovereign had consigned him. It appears that when he was formerly seized by his kinsman, his minister, Sumati, contrived to effect his own escape, along with his sister and the young princess. That sister, Kausiki, now reveals herself in the person of the Parivrajika, and continues the story of their flight. Sumati joined a caravan bound to Vidisa. On their way through the Vindhya mountains they were attacked by the foresters, who were armed with bows and arrows, and decorated with peacock's plumes: in the affray Sumati was slain and Malavika was lost. Kausiki, left alone, committed her brother's body to the flames, and then resumed her route to Vidisa, where she assumed the character of a female ascetic. The Raja observes she did wisely, which if a Bandha ascetic be here, as is usual, intended, is a tolerant expression of some weight with regard to the antiquity of the drama. Kausiki soon found out Malavika, but forebore to discover herself confiding in the prophecy of a sage, who had foretold that the princess, after passing through a period of servitude, would meet with a suitable match.

The story now pauses, whilst Agnimitra issues his orders respecting the terms to be granted to Yajnasena, the king of Vidarbha, the half of whose territory he assigns to Madhavasena, the brother of Malavika, their dominions to lie respectively north and south of the Varada river, the Wurda of modern times, and retaining till very lately its character of a boundary, separating the states of the Nizam from those of the Nagpore, the Vidarbha or Berar Raja. In this part of the play, also, is the allusion to the general Pushpamitra. A letter arrives from him, giving an account of some transactions that have occurred upon the southern bank of the Indus. On his own behalf, or that of his son, he had undertaken to celebrate an *asvamedha*, or sacrifice of a horse, for which it was essential that the steed should have a free range for twelve months, being attended only by a guard to secure him. This guard had been placed by Pushpamitra under the command of Agnimitra's son, Visumitra. Whilst following the victim along the Indus, a party of Yavana horse attempted to carry off the courser, but they were encoun-

tered by the young prince, and after a sharp conflict, defeated. Pushpamitra concludes with inviting his son to come with his family to complete the sacrifice. The queen, Dharini, overjoyed by the news of her son's success and safety, distributes rich presents to all her train and the females of Agnimitra's establishment, whilst to him she presents Malavika. Iravati communicates her concurrence in this arrangement, and the Raja obtains another bride. The piece closes with his expressing his hope, that he may ever retain the regard of his first queen, Dharini, and that his subjects may never suffer any calamity whilst he

The Vidushaka, however, treats the whole as a dream, and reproaches the prince with his sickliness, as he had just before fallen in love with Kuvalayamala, the princess of Kuntala, and recommends him to be content with the queen, as 'a partridge in the hand is better than a peacock in the forest.'

The king and the Vidushaka then go into the garden, where, over the edge of a terrace, they see some of the fair tenants of the inner apartments amusing themselves with swinging, a favourite pastime with the people of India. Amongst them the king recognises the countenance he has seen in his dream, but the party disappear on the advance of the Raja and his friend.

The Raja then enters a pleasure house or pavilion called the Keli Kailasa—the Kailasa or (mountain so called) of sport. It is an apartment described as built of crystal and decorated with statues and paintings. Amongst the latter is one which by an artist familiar with Indian antiquities and costumes, might be wrought into an instructive and interesting composition, it is thus described:

'There is your Majesty at *pasa* (dice) with the queen; he hind you stands one damsel with the betel box whilst another is waving the *choum* over your head, the dwarf is playing with the monkey, and the parrot abusing the Vidushaka.'

The chamber also contains the portrait of Mrigankavali, the damsel whom the Raja has really seen in his supposed dream, and who is in the baram in the character of a youth though wearing female attire. There is also a statue of her, whence the prince is named *Piddha Silabharjika*, meaning a curved effigy. Finally the lady is herself beheld through the transparent wall of the pavilion but runs away on being observed. The Raja and his friend follow her in vain, the bards proclaim it noon, and the two friends repair to the queen's apartments to perform the mid day ceremonies.

A conversation between two of the female attendants opens the second act, and gives us the history of Kuvalayamala the object of the Raja's passion before encountering his new flame. She is the daughter of Chindramahisena the king of Kuntala, and has been sent to Vidyadhara Malla's queen, as the betrothed bride of the supposed son of Chandravarman who is the queen's maternal uncle. Then follows a frolic practised by Mekhala the queen's foster sister, on the king's confidant, Charayana. He is promised a new hrido by the queen and the ceremony is about to take place when the spouse proves to be a "lubberly boy" he is highly indignant at the trick and goes off threatening vengeance.

The Raja having followed and pacified his companion, they go into the garden, where they see the damsel Mrigankavali playing with ball, she still, however, flies their advance.

Presently they overhear a conversation between her and one of her companions, from which it appears that, notwithstanding her shyness, she is equally enamoured of the Raja. Evening is now proclaimed, and the parties retire.

A similar dialogue with that which commenced the second, begins the third act, the parties only being different. We now learn that the dream was the contrivance of the minister, Mrigankavali having been persuaded by the speaker Sulakshana, at his instigation, to believe that she was to behold the present deity of love, and having been introduced by a sliding door into the king's chamber. The minister's object in effecting a marriage between the Raja and the nymph, is to secure to his master the station of universal monarch, which a seer has prophesied shall accompany the haad of Mrigankavali. The author here, therefore, is indebted, either to the *Satnarali*, or perhaps in common with that, to the popular story of *Kat'a*, for his notions. The consequence of the interview has been to render Mrigankavali passionately enamoured of the king.

From this we proceed to Charayana's retaliation. He has induced one of the women to hide in a bush, and when Mekhala passed, to announce to her she would die on the next full moon, unless she prostrated herself at the feet of some Brahman and crawled between his legs. The plot has so far succeeded that Mekhala and the queen, both overcome with concern, have entreated Charayana to be the Brahman that shall preserve the life of the former. The transaction takes place, and when Mekhala crawls between his legs Charayana proclaims the decree, triumphs in the humiliation he has inflicted on her—the queen is in her turn incensed, and goes off in a pet. The Raja and the Vidushaka seek the garden, where it is now moonlight. Mrigankavali and her friend Vilakshana also come thither, and the lovers meet; this interview is broken off by a cry that the queen is coming, and they all separate abruptly.

The fourth and last act begins again with the dawn, when we have Charayana and his wife introduced, the latter asleep. In her sleep, however, she is very communicative, and repeats a supposed dialogue between the queen and the Raja, in which the former urges the latter to marry Mrigankavali, the sister of the supposed Mrigankavarma, come on a visit, it is pretended, to her brother—this being a plot of the queen to cheat the king into a sham marriage by espousing him to one she believes to be

of the Hindu drama, but the people of India sleep with so little of the "pomp and circumstance" of the bed-chamber, that there is no violation of decorum in such a representation.

The Vidushaka having joined the Raja, a rather tedious conversation ensues, in which the amatory emotions of the Raja and his new mistress are described. This is interrupted by the preparations for the marriage, and they are followed by the ceremony. Vidyadhara-Malla being wedded on the stage to Mrigankavali, another violation of dramatic rules, which prohibits the exhibition of sacred rites. In this case the holy fire is introduced and circumambulated. As soon as this is done, a messenger arrives from Chandravarman, to announce that his master has a son, that consequently no further necessity exists for his daughter's assuming a character not belonging to her, and Mrigankavali accordingly is to be recognised as his daughter. The queen now finds that she has taken herself in and given herself another rival bride; as the matter is past remedy, however, she assents with a good grace, and allows Vidyadhara-Malla to marry Kuvalayamala into the bargain. To crown the King's happiness, a messenger arrives from the camp with the news that the allied army of Karnata, Simhala, Pandya, Merala, Andhra, and Konkana has been defeated, and Virapala, king of Kuntala, the ally of Vidyadhara-Malla, reseated on a throne, from which his kinsman, supported by those troops, had formerly expelled him. The authority of Vidyadhara-Malla is now declared to extend from the mouths of the Ganges to the sea, and from the Narmada to the Tamraparni in the Dekhin, he being the chief of the Karachuli race, a Rajput tribe.

Many circumstances prove this drama to be comparatively modern; the language is more ornate than classical, the ideas are more affected than poetical; allusions to current practices and modes of dress are frequent and conversational, and proverbial forms of speech are not rare. The state of manners, particularly as affects the multitudes of wives, is not of ancient character, for although there was no restriction in this respect, it does not appear that any very great latitude was usually exercised. Dasaratha had three wives, but his son Rama had but one. Paudu had two, Dhritarashtra but one, and many of the traditional kings of the Hindus, in like manner, contented themselves with the same number. According to the law, indeed, the first wife was considered to fulfil the moral end of the

put, and he is said to be the son of the king Nirbbya, or Nirbhaya-Narendra. The Sutradhara observes of the assembly, that it is formed of the learned men of the great city of Mahodaya, or the great Udaya, possibly Udayapur, the princes of which city affect to trace their descent from Rama. The modern city of Udayapur, however, was not founded before the sixteenth century, and the name must be applied to some other place, unless it be no more than a title meaning the very splendid or fortunate. We cannot doubt the long prior existence of the drama, from the mention made of it or of its author, in the works to which we may add the *Kavya prakasa*, a work probably anterior to the foundation of the modern Udayspur. Mahodaya may be the origin of the name of Mahoba, a city of which extensive ruins remain, and of which the history is little known. In a verse cited from another work by the writer, the *Karpura Manjari*, his wife, is styled "the chaplet of the crest of the Chouban race," from which it follows that he belonged to that tribe. We can only conclude, therefore, that Raja-Sekhara was the minister of some Rajput prince, who flourished in Central India, at the end of the eleventh or beginning of the twelfth century.

Besides the *Viddd-Salabhanjika*, Raja Sekhara is the author of the *Karpura-Manjari*, a dramatic composition of the class called *Sattaka*, entirely in prakrit. It is named as a specimen of the class in the *Sahitya Darpana*. The *Bala-Ramayana* is another dramatic performance attributed to this author, and is named in the same work.

HANUMAN NATAKA ; OR MAHANATAKA
A Drama in Fourteen Acts

The *Hanuman-Nataka* or as it is emphatically termed, the *Maha* or great *Nataka*, is evidently an imperfect performance, and the work of various hands. The legendary tale, which obscurely accounts for this, will be hereafter noticed : it is only necessary to advert to it here, in order to understand the progress of the drama. As might be implied from the title the story is connected with that of Rama, the monkey-chief Hanumat being a very important character in the adventures of the prince. The subject of the play is, in fact, the story of the *Ramayana*, and it follows the order of the poem from the birth of Rama till his return to Ayodhya, after the conquest of Lanka. It agrees therefore, in its *dramatis personae*, also with the *Vira-Charitra*, and it is unnecessary to repeat the list.

Two or more benedictory stanzas, invoking the favour of Hari as Rama, open the piece, but there is no mention of the *Sutradhara*, nor is there any prelude. We have, indeed, both and throughout, no notice of entrances nor exits, nor in

general any indication of the speaker, being left to infer the appropriate persons from the business of the scene, or being directed to their specification by the conjectures of the commentator. It is very evident that the person who speaks is very frequently unconnected with the story, and is the poet himself. This is the case at starting as it begins :

"There was an illustrious and powerful monarch, the subduer of foes and the renowned ornament of the exalted house of the sun, named Dasaratha, in whose family, for the purpose of relieving the earth of her burthen, Bhurisrivas (Vishnu) deigned to incorporate his divine substance as four blooming youths. The eldest, endowed with the qualities of imperial worth, was Rama, the descendant of Raghu."

The poet then cursorily notices the early exploits of the hero, and states his going with Lakshmana to the court of Mithila, to try his strength in the bending of the bow of Siva, and thereby winning Sita for his bride ; we have this represented dramatically ; and Sita, Janaka, the messenger or Purohita of Ravana, Lakshmana, and Rama, maintain a dialogue easily followed, which ends in Rama's triumph—the bow is broken, and he wins his bride.

The consequences of breaking the bow are then narrated by an indifferent person or the poet, and Parasurama's appearance on hearing the sound is also in description. We have here, in the passages describing him, one stanza which belongs to the *Vira-Charitra*, and another said to occur in the *Prabodha-Chandrodaya*. The dialogue that ensues is something like that in the *Vira-Charitra*, but it terminates in Rama's trying the bow of Parasurama, and shooting an arrow from it which flies to Swarga. Parasurama acknowledges him to be his superior, and the poet then proceeds to state, that Rama and his brother, with Janaka and different sages, went to the capital of that prince, and Rama was married to Sita. This ends the first act, called the *Sita-Swayamvara*.

The second act has no pretension to a dramatic character, being a description by the writer of the loves of Sita and Rama, in a strain which is prohibited by a positive rule, and is an offence against decency as well as the drama. It is evidently the addition of a comparatively modern and corrupt period, prior indeed to the vitiation of style, but marked by the debasement of moral feeling amongst the Hindus, which led to the degeneracy of poetical taste and subversion of political existence.

The third act is less dramatic than the first, and is wholly descriptive ; such speeches as do occur being conformable to the usual style of oriental composition, which assigns speeches to the speaker in the first, and not in the third person, rather than to their being actually part of a dramatic dialogue. The subjects are the exile of Rama, his fixing his residence at Panchavati, the

appearance of Maricha as a deer, and the chase of the supposed animal by Rama and Lakshman at Sita's request

The act opens with a description of the portents that indicated Rama's impending separation from his father, the cause of which is the curse denounced upon the latter by the father of the ascetic whom whilst formerly hunting he had accidentally slain, but the passage though a striking one is an imitation of several similar descriptions in the *Mahabharata*

Whilst thus their hours the youthful pair devoted
To love that with enjoyment grew the term
When the stern curse the Muni's sire denounced,
Upon the erring king should shed its influence,
Approached The sun with radiance dimmed looked forth,
Whilst fiery torches waved along the sky,
And meteors darted headlong through mid heaven,
Earth shook the firmament rained showers of blood,
Around, the horizon thickened In the day,
The pale stars gleamed, eclipse unseasonable
Darkened the noon, day echoed with the howls
Of dogs and jackals, whilst the air replied
With horrid sounds and strange such as shall peal,
When the destroying deity, in thunder,
Proclaims the dissolution of the world

The dialogue continues very regularly dramatic to the end of the act, when Angada having in vain endeavoured to persuade Ravana to restore Sita, leaves him to expect the immediate advance of the monkey host.

The ninth act begins with narrative, but soon breaks into a string of moral and political sentences, supposed to be uttered by Virupaksha and Mahodara, two of Ravana's ministers. Several of these sentences occur in the *Histopadesa* Ravana is not to be persuaded, but goes to Sita to try the effect of his personal solicitations—first endeavouring to deceive her by two fictitious heads, made to assume the likenesses of Rama and his brother. Sita's lamentations are stopped by a heavenly monitor, who tells her the heads are the work of magic, and they instantly disappear. Ravana then vaunts his prowess in war and love, and approaches Sita to embrance her. She exclaims,

Forbear, forbear ! proud fiend, the jetty arms
Of my loved lord, or thy relentless sword,
Alone shall touch my neck.

Thus repulsed, Ravana withdraws, and presently reappears as Rama, with his own ten heads in his hands. Sita thinking him what he appears is about to embraco him, when the secret virtue of her character as a faithful wife detects the imposition and reveals the truth to her. Ravana, baffled and mortified, is compelled to relinquish his design. Sita's apprehensions, lest she should be again beguiled, are allayed by a voice from heaven, which announces that she will not see the real Rama until she has beheld Mandodari kiss the dead body of her husband Ravana. The act ends with a verse of familiar application and double import, being a series of quibbles ; but it does not belong to this place, for it alludes to Knsa and Lava, who were not born for many years.

The eleventh act proceeds with the preparation for the combat, going from one party to the other very abruptly and unmethodically. A female Rakshasi attempts to assassinate Rama, but is stopped and slain by Angada. The army then advances to Lanka, and Ravana comes forth to meet it. Kumhhakarna, his gigantic and sleepy brother, is disturbed from his repose to combat. He is rather out of humour at first and recommends Ravana to give up the lady, observing,

Though the commands of royalty pervade
The world, yet sovereigns ever should remember,
The light of justice must direct their path.

Ravana bids him go to sleep again :

They who assist us with a holy text
Are but indifferent friends. These arms have dashed

Their golden bracelets on the polished peaks
 Of the eternal adamantine rock,
 Uprooted from its base, and wrested victory
 From the opposing grasp of gods and demons.
 Confiding in thy prowess, sure in theo
 To triumph o'er my foes, I have relaxed
 Their fibre, but again their nerves are braced.
 I need thee not ; hence to thy cell and sleep.

Kum. King, do not grieve, but like a valiant chief,
 Pluck from thy beart all terror of thine enemies,
 And only deem of thy propitious fortune,
 • Or who shall foremost plunge into the fight—
 I will not quit thee

Kumbhakarna's advance appears to terrify Rama's troops,
 as he thinks it necessary to address them ;

Ho ! chiefs and heroes, why this groundless panic,
 The prowess of our enemy untried
 In closer conflict ? Ocean's myriad fry
 Would drain the fountain, and before the swarm
 Of hostile gnats the mighty lion falls.

Kumbhakarna is killed by Rama ; on which Indrajit, the son of Ravana, proceeds against the brethren. By the arrow called *Nagapata*, presented him by Brahma, he casts Rama and Lakshmana senseless on the ground, and then goes to Nikumbila mountain to obtain a magic car by means of sacrifice. Hanumat disturbs his rites. Rama and Lakshmana revive, and on being sprinkled with drops of *amrita* brought by Garuda, the latter with a swift decapitates Meghananda and tosses the head into the hands of his father Ravana, which ends the twelfth act.

In the opening of the thirteenth act, Ravana levels a shaft at Lakshmana, given him by Brahma, and charged with the certain fate of one hero. It should seem to be something of the nature of fire arms, a shell or a rocket, as Hanumat snatches it away, after it has struck Lakshmana, before it does mischief. Ravana reproaches Brahma, and he sends Narada to procure the dart again and keep Hanumat out of the way. With the fatal weapons Lakshmana is fit for dead. Rama despairs :

My soldiers in their caves shall find protection ;
 With Sita I can die, but thou, Vibhishana, .
 What shall become of theo ?

Hanumat reappears and encourages him. Ravana has a celebrated physician, Soshena, who is brought away from Lanka

When vanquished, thou couldst drag an abject life
 In great Haihaya's dungeons, till thy sire
 Begged thee to freedom, as the scanty dole
 The vagrant gleans from charity For thee
 Alone I blush, unworthy of my triumph

Ravana falls under the arrows of Rama, and Mandodari, his bride, bewails his death. The poet moralises on his end

The heads that once on Siva's breast sustained
 With heavenly splendour shone, now lie beneath
 The vulture's talons Such, alas! the doom
 • That waits on mortal creatures, thus the fruit
 Of crimes committed in a former life,
 Evolves to ripeness in our after being

Sita is recovered, but Rama is rather shy of his bride, until her purity is established by her passing through the fiery ordeal, a test she successfully undergoes, in description not in action. Indeed, after the dialogue between Rama and Ravana, the style is scarcely ever colloquial. Rama returns with Sita and his friends to Ayodhya, when Angada challenges them all to fight him, as it is now time to revenge his father's death. A voice from heaven, however, tells him to be pacified, as Bali will be born as a hunter in a future age, and kill Rama who will be then Krishna, he is accordingly appeased. Allusion to these incidents is peculiar to this drama, not occurring in the *Ramayana*, *Vira Charitra*, or *Murari-Nataka*. Rama is then described as seated on the throne of Ayodhya, and a brief reference is made to his ultimate exile of Sita, after which the piece concludes with a string of stanzas of obscure and difficult construction in general, in praise of Rambandra. The last verse contains a brief statement of the history of the poem.

The *Mahanataka* is said to be originally the work of Hanumat, who engraved or wrote it on the rocks. Valmiki saw it, and anticipated the greater sweetness of its style would throw his *Ramayana* into the shade. When he complained to the monkey, the latter had so little of the author about him, that he told the bard to cast the verses into the sea. Valmiki obeyed the injunction, and the *Mahanataka* remained concealed for ages under the waves. At last portions were discovered and brought to Bhoja, by whose command Damodara Misra arranged the fragments, filled up the chasms, and formed the whole into an entire work. There is no reason to doubt as much of this story as is credible, or that the fragments of an ancient drama was connected in the manner described. Some of the ideas are poetical, and the sentiments just and forcible: the language is in general very harmonious, but the work itself is after all a

most disjointed and nondescript composition, and the patch-work is very glaringly and clumsily put together.

The date of the play is established, by the mention of Bhoja, to be a work of the tenth or eleventh century; and it is in part corroborative of the correctness of the assertion, that the drama was the work of Damodara Misra, that the poet Damodara is named in the *Bhoja Prabandha* as one of the many writers patronised by that monarch. That work also records the anecdote of some verses, attributed to Hanumat being discovered by a merchant in Bhoja's reign, engraved-upon some rocks on the sea-shore: the merchant brings a copy of the two first stanzas of one verse, and Bhoja travels to the spot to obtain the other two. The verse when complete is one that occurs in the play, and is that last translated: "The head that once" &c.

One comment of this drama is the work of Mohanadasa, a *Ranabhakta*, and possibly by his name as well as that attribute, a *Vaishnava-Vairagin*.

DIHANANJAYA-VIJAYA

This is a drama in one act, the subject of which is taken from the Virata-Parvan of the *Mahabharata*, and describes the recovery of the cattle of the Raja Virata by Arjuna, after they had been carried off by Karna and the Kuru princes. The different chiefs appear, and threaten each other and praise themselves, very much in the strain of Homer's heroes. The battle is thrown into narrative, being described in a conversation between Indra and some of his attendants as they contemplate it from the clouds. The drama belongs to the class termed *Vijayoga*. It is the composition of Kanchana Acharya, the son of Narayana, a celebrated teacher of the yoga, of the race of Kapimuni, or Kapyayana Brahmans. The drama is performed in the autumnal season at the close of the rains, upon Vishnu's waking from his slumbers, by the written order of Jagaddeva, or in one copy, Jayadeva; which is delivered to the manager on the stage, for the entertainment of Gadadhara Misra and others. We have a Jayadeva, king of Kanouj, in the end of the twelfth century, and Gadadhara Misra is said to be a writer of repute, but of what works has not been ascertained. He is not the same as the celebrated logician Gadadhara Bhattacharya, who was a native of Bengal, as the affix *misra* indicates a native of Gangetic Hindustan.

ANARGHA RAGHAVA: OR MURARI NATAKA A Drama in Seven Acts

This play is most usually known by the latter appellation, which it derives from the author; the former is its most legitimate title,

implying the sacred descendant of Raghu, Rama being the hero of the piece. The story is consequently the same with that of the *Vira-Charitra* and *Hanuman-Nataka*, and the characters therefore need no particular specification.

The subject of the prelude is of an unusual description. The Sutradhara states that the assembly is collected on occasion of the *Purushottamayatra*: that all the world is well acquainted with the talents of Kalaha-Kandala, an actor from another island (one comment says, Simbala or Ceylon), and that he himself is the scholar of the Professor Bahurupi and a native of the middle country (explained by another comment, Ayodhya or Oude). The first-named actor then sends the *Sutradhara*, whilst on the stage, a challenge to try their skill, and the manager determines that it shall be put to the test in the *Anargha-Raghava*, a new composition by Murari, the son of Tantumati, and Sri Vardhamana-Bhatta, of the Maudgalya family.

The first act opens with a conversation between Dasaratha and Vamadeva, which serves to introduce Viswamitra, who comes to request the aid of Rama. The dialogue between him and the king is an effort to outdo each other in complimentary speeches, most of which are in the very worst taste. As, for example, Viswamitra says to the king:

Confiding in your surety, that earth
No longer has occasion of alarm,
Iдра but rarely waviog in the clouds
His bow, forgoes its practice, and forgets
His skill. Nay, further; from the copious draughts
Of ghee your ceaseless sacrifices offer,
His every limb is grown of size uowieldy,
And scarcely can he see out of his eyes.

However, the whole composition is not of this description, and it does contain a few redeeming passages. When Viswamitra urges Dasaratha to aid him by the intermediate agency of Rama, he observes:

The monarch of the day invests the dawn
With delegated rays to scatter night,
And ocean sends his ministers the clouds,
To shed his waters o'er the wide-spread earth.

The king also considering, and being reminded by Vamadeva that the race of Raghu never sent away a petitioner ungratified, sends for Rama and Lakshmana, and allows Viswamitra to take them with him.

The second act opens at dawn with a dialogue between Sunahsepa and Pasumedhra, two of the disciples of Viswamitra, to which the former gives the latter several legendary

talk relating to Bali and Ravana and the Rakshasas and the interruption occasioned by Taraka to their rites on which account Rama and Lakshmana have been brought to the hermitage to protect them. Sunthsepha goes to collect wood and Pasumedhra to see the princes Rama and Lakshmana now describe the situation of the hermitage its tenants and their duties. The former is on the banks of the Kausiki or Coosy river they then describe the moon and are supposed to rest in the shade till towards evening although they do not leave the stage nor is the dialogue interrupted they are then joined by Viswamitra who gives a long description of sunset until he is stopped by the cry that Taraka is abroad. Rama after some hesitation about killing a female goes to destroy her & on his return he expatiates at great length on the rising of the moon.

The sovereign moon not yet overtops the hills
 But his precursor rays that waken all
 The beauty of the lotus spread through heaven
 And as they bright advance they chase the vapours
 Far to the bounds of earth or banish them
 Deep in the rocky caves or else prepare
 To seize them living captives as they seek
 A refuge in the shadows of the mountain

This is well enough but then comes ridiculous conceit

The watery darkness by the lunar beams
 Is cleansed as by the purifying nut
 Clear gleams the air and in the shadowy hollows
 The cloudy mire precipitated falls
 Or by the glittering shears the brilliant heaven
 Is shorn and piecemeal into fragments clipped
 The shadows like the dusky rind are peeled
 And here and there are scattered o'er the vale

Upon his rejoining the sage Viswamitra proposes that they shall visit Mithila

The third act opens with a dialogue between the chamberlain and one of Sita's attendants from which it appears that Sita begins to be conscious of her youth and that Ravana has sent to demand her in marriage. A conversation next ensues between Viswamitra Janaka and Satananda in which the two princes are introduced to the King and Viswamitra urges Janaka to let Rama try to bend the bow of Siva. Saushkala the messenger of Ravana now arrives to demand Sita in marriage for his master refusing at the same time on his part to submit to the test of bending Sita's bow. Satananda replies for Janaka and desires Rama to go and try his fortune. The princes obey and

Rama is described by those on the stage as breaking the bow, he has therefore won the lady. The family connection is extended by the promise of Urmila, Mandavi, and Srutakirtti to Rama's brothers. Saushkala is highly indignant, and departs to carry the information to his master's minister.

Act fourth, Malyavat describes the rising of the sun and his disappointment on Ravana's account. Surpanakha arrives from Videha, and announces that Rama and Sita are married. Malyavat anticipates that Ravana will carry her off and to render the attempt less perilous projects inveigling Rama into the forest alone, for which he sends Surpanakha in the disguise of Manthara, the attendant of Kaikeyi. She tells him that she had heard of Parasurama's approach to Mithila and Malyavat conjectures the possibility of some good being effected by the result. The next scene introduces Parasurama in the same strain as the *Mahavira Charitra* but more extravagantly. Rama's humility is more excessive and the other characters carry on a *utuprative dialogue* with Parasurama without appearing successively from behind the scenes. We shall not cite any of the dialogue beyond Rama's reply to Parasurama's boasts of his destruction of the Kshattriya race. 'This flag of your fame is now worn to tatters let us see if you can mount a new one.' Rama then calls for his bow, and Parasurama presents him with his axe. They go forth to fight, a voice behind proclaims that Sita is apprehensive that Rama again draws the bow for a maiden prize, and that he cannot draw it in vain. This is all.

generally plain and intelligible, but there is no poetry. Some of the attempts at description make but a poor figure by the side of Bhavabhuti's delineations of the same scenery, and the dialogue between Jatayu and Jambavat is a sorry substitute for the scene between Jatayu and Sampati in the *Vira-Charitra*. Lakshmana now appears, and is soon after joined by Rama, and both express their grief, but with more philosophy than pathos. Lakshmana observes:

The worse the ill that fate on noble souls
Inflicts, the more their firmness, and they arm
Their spirits with adamant to meet the blow.

Rama replies:

The firmness I was born with or was reared to,
And rage, that fills my heart, restrains my sorrows ;
But harder is the task to fit my soul
To bear unmurmuring a husband's shame.

Whilst engaged in conversation a cry of distress is heard, and on looking out, the youths observe Guha, the friendly forest monarch, assailed by the demon Kabandha, or a fiend without a head. Lakshmana goes to his aid, and returns with his friend Guha. In the act of delivering him, Lakshmana has tossed away the skeleton of Dundubhi, a giant, suspended by Bali, and Bali, deeming this an insult, presently appears. After a prolix interchange of civility and defiance, Rama and Bali go off the stage to determine their respective supremacy by single combat ; the result is described by Lakshmana and Guha ; Bali is slain. Voices without announce the inauguration of Sugriva, and his determination to assist Rama to recover Sita, and Lakshmana and his friend leave the stage to join the party. The whole of this act is very flat and undramatic, and the same character may be given of the rest of the drama ; we have nothing but sounding words and obscure mythology, with very few poetical ideas or rational reflections.

The sixth act contains the business of description, and Sarana and Suka, two of Ravana's emissaries, describe to his minister Malyavat, the formation of the bridge over the sea, and the advance of Rama's army ; they foretell, also, an unfortunate result from Rama's celerity, as Malyavat observes : "The activity of an assailant is ever the best assurance of success." Voices behind announce that Kumbhakarna and Meghanada have gone forth to battle. Malyavat wishes them prosperity, in a phrase perfectly oracular : *Utinam Ramum et Lakshmanum, Kumbhakarnum et Meghanadum vincere possem*. The clumsy contrivance of voices behind the scene proclaims the deaths of Kum-

bhakarna and Meghanada, and announces the departure of Ravana to the field. Malyavat determines to follow him:

Haste we to Ravana, 'tis all I can
 In battle pilgrimage to expiate
 The sin of feeble age, and on the sword
 Resign a life, now useless to my sovereign.

The remainder of the act is a very prolix and nerveless description of the final contest and overthrow of Ravana, in an extravagantly laboured dialogue between two Vidyadharas. Several pages here are so insufferably tedious, and at the same time so difficult of construction, that they are quite unreadable, there being nothing to repay the pains of making out the meaning.

The seventh and last act resembles the concluding act of the *Vira-Charitra*, and describes the return of Rama with his wife and brother, and accompanied by Vibhishana and Sugriva, in the celestial car of Kuvera, to his capital Ayodhya. It is, of course, an act of pure description, and as little dramatic as the similar act of the *Vira-Charitra*, but unenlivened by the picturesque beauties which relieve the want of action in that drama. It is also infinitely more prolix, and in the same proportion more tedious. The route is also very preposterously diversified. In the *Vira-Charitra*, the travellers proceed over the Dekhin, through Aryavarta, or India proper, to the Snowy Mountains, and then turn back at once to Ayodhya. Murari takes them from Rama's bridge into the upper regions, whence they descry the different holy portions of the mythological mountain Sumeru, and visit Chandraloka, or the region of the moon; the sole object of which absurd deviation is a laboured and obscure display of legendary lore, the mythological details relating to Sumeru, Kailasa and the Chandraloka, occupying several hundred verses. The author then descends within ken of the earth and commences his terrestrial description with an account of Simhala, or Ceylon, distinguishing that island, like all modern Hindu writers from Lanka. The reason is obvious enough, particularly in a writer of the south of India, Simhala, or Ceylon, being too well known to be made the seat of legendary personages, supposed, as is the case with Vibhishana and his Rakshasas, to be still existing. From Simhala we then pursue a tolerably rational route, described more in detail than in the *Vira-Charitra*. The places named are the Malaya mountains, the forest, the mountain Prasavana, the Godavari, mount Malyavat, Kundinipura in the Maharashtra country, the shrine of Bhimeswara, the city of Kanchi, Ujjayini, and the temple of Mahakala, Mhishmati, the capital of Chedi, the Jumna and Ganga rivers, and Varanasi, Mithila or Tirhut, and Champa.

near Bhigalpur. The travellers then proceed westward to Prayaga and the Antarvedi or Doab, when they again follow an easterly course and arrive at Ayodhya. Vasishtha the priest and the brothers of Rama, await his arrival, on which he is crowned, and the piece concludes.

Enough has been said to convey a correct notion of the character of the *Anargha-Raghava*. It has no dramatic merit being deficient in character, action, situation and interest. As a poem it presents occasionally poetic thoughts but they are very few and are lost amidst pages of flat commonplace quain conceit, hyperbolical extravagance, and obscure mythology. Yet this drama bears in general a much higher character with the *pandits* of the present day than the truly poetical composition of Bhavabhuti and Kalidasa. The vitiation of taste and abjectness of sentiment prevalent amongst them, sufficiently explain this unjust preference. The Hindus of these days are little able to estimate purity of conception, delicacy of feeling, or brilliancy of fancy, they trouble themselves, indeed, very little with thoughts, and bound their criticism to an author's style. The language of Murari is, of course, as far from good taste as his ideas, but it has merit. As a specimen of elaborate composition, it is unsurpassed, and the intricate and not unmusical combination of the words evinces prodigious labour, and a wonderful command of the Sanskrit language. One consequence of this is a total want of perspicuity, and without being intently studied and learnt by rote, there is little chance that the *Anargha-Raghava* will be understood throughout.

Besides the celebrity Murari-Misra derives from his elaborate style, he is indebted to the author of the *Siddhanta-Kaumudi* for no slender reputation. As he deals largely in unusual grammatical forms and combinations, Bhattoji-Dikshita has not unfrequently recourse to the *Anargha-Raghava* for the illustration of his grammatical rules.

The style of the drama is sufficient evidence that the *Anargha-Raghava* is of modern date. It is not possible, however, to fix the period of its composition with any precision. It of course preceded the *Siddhanta-Kaumudi*, a work about two centuries old. It is subsequent to the time at which public festivals were instituted at Cuttack in honour of Jagannath, as it was represented at the *Purushottama-Yatra*. As, however, the choice of the hero was Rama, and no allusion is made to Krishna or Radha, there can be little doubt that it preceded the enthusiasm excited in favour of those latter divinities, by the Bengal visionary Chaitanya, in the end of the fifteenth century and which still influences the prevailing worship of Cuttack. The bad taste displayed in the work will not allow us to carry it much farther back, and it is possibly, therefore, a production of the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

In the present instance two commentaries have been consulted ; one is short and without any name ; the other is full to tediousness. It is the composition of Sri-Ruchi-Mabopadhyaya, by command of the king Bhairava Deva, son of Narasimha Deva. The country governed by the prince is not named. If Orissa be intended, as is probable, this comment may be the work of the latter part of the thirteenth, or beginning of the fourteenth century. Narasimha-Deva, king of Orissa, ascending the throne in 1236.

SARADA-TILAKA

This is a piece of the class called *Bhana*, or a monologue in one act, although of considerable length.

Rasikasekhara, a man of licentious habits, gives an account of the different individuals he encounters in the streets of Kotalabapur, at the time of the vernal festival. By far the greatest portion of the piece is in description, but part is in a suppositional dialogue, in which Rasikasekhara having addressed some individual whom he names, adds *kim bravishi ?* "what do you say ?" and then repeats himself the reply. The persons thus interrogated are chiefly females and courtesans, and the dialogue very generally will not admit of translation ; occasionally it should appear, also, that the male characters show themselves for a short interval, and speak for themselves, but there is no stage direction for entrance or exit. It is possible, therefore, that the whole is the exhibition of a single performer, who varying his voice and appearance, adapts himself to the different personations ; a feat not uncommonly nor badly accomplished by some of the Indian *Bhands*, or professional jesters and mimics of the present day, although they may fall short of the more cultivated talent of this class in Europe.

Of the individuals described, the majority are women ; and the following are some of the most characteristic notices given by Rasikasekhara, who here is supposed to address a companion :

"Look where the lotus-eyed damsels of Kankana approach : their slender waists decorated with tinkling bells, and their charms guiding the shafts of Kama into every bosom.

There goes the maid of Gurjara, blooming as with perpetual youth, having eyes like the *chakora* of the complexion of the yellow *rochana*, and a voice musical as that of the parrot. She wears anklets of silver, large ear-rings set with pearls, and her bodice is buttoned below the hips with gems.

The matron of Maharashtra proceeds yonder, her forehead stained with saffron, and with silver chains upon her feet. She wears a coloured veil, and a girdle round her loins.

Here comes the damsel of Nepal, whose locks are blacker than the bee, whose bosom is fragrant with musk, and whose forehead bears a mark brighter than the new moon

Bebold that lotus faced maiden of Pandya bearing offerings in her hand, her person is decorated with pearls and her bosom perfumed with sandal

A Chola female approaches whose cheeks are tinted with saffron, and whose dress is embroidered with the buds of the lotus

The bosoms of those Dravida women are as moonlight in the courts of the young, whilst those of others are like lamps in water jars

Observe the lovely form of the damsels of Karnata, whose forehead is stamped with a mole of musk and tinted with safflower, whose ears are ornamented with rings of gold and whose bosom attracts the hearts of men

Look at that Andhra female, whose graceful ear is decorated by the scroll of gold, whose nose ring set with pearls trembles to her breath, and over whose bosom spreads the saffron dyed vest

The female worshipper of Siva advances, her forehead streaked with the double line of ashy whiteness, and from whose neck the string of cowries depends, her soft lips are ruddy with betel, and her curls are of darkest jet

And mark where the damsel devoted to Vishnu proceeds her forehead marked with the saffron crescent, her tresses playing upon her long neck, and her eyes beautiful as the lotus"

The personages next in frequency of description are religious characters, to whom the author shews no great favour, not only in his portraits but in one or two piquant anecdotes related in the course of the piece, of which some pious vagrant is the hero

'Eh! who are these I see? The Jangama covered with ashes, wearing his hair in a braid, carrying the type of Siva round his neck, and having shoes on his feet, he bears in his hand the segment of a skull and the Vaishnava, his forehead marked with an upright streak, carrying a bow decorated with bells and peacock's feathers, and a wallet at his side'

There go the readers of the Puranas, carrying under their arms the sacred volumes wrapped up in the cloth on which they take their seat. They have rosaries in their hands, and their foreheads are stained with sandal

Here, the haughty Yatis approach, clad in vestments dyed with ochre, bearing bamboo staves, round which their nether vesture is wrapped, and arrogantly promulgating false doctrines

And there go the personifications of hypocrisy, the Yogins who to impose upon the people are counting their rosaries, and have smeared their bodies with the ashes of burnt cowdung. They suffer their beards to grow, their garments are dyed with

ochre, and they carry their wallets under their arms, covered with the skin of the black deer”

One of the most laboured descriptions is the following

“Here comes a snake catcher, with his serpent and monkey. Upon his head he wears a scanty plume of peacock's feathers, round one of his arms winds the tendril of a vine, and a bracelet of shells decorates the other. His braided locks project from above his forehead, whilst beneath them from ear to ear, extends across his brow the single streak of asbes. Repeating the incantation of Garuda, and meditating upon his spiritual teacher, he cautiously opens his basket, and draws forth the slowly excited reptile. Whilst the exhibitor is shaking his knee with one hand, and with the other playing upon his pipe, the snake slowly raises his head and expands his hood. The monkey then darts upon the snake and grifes him with his teeth, and then recedes from the fury with which he darts forth his venom. Wonderful are the works of Brahma! and yet what marvel is there that men can tame venomous animals, when women can tame men!”

In the original, the quibble is upon the word *blujanga* which means a gallant or a snake.

Except a few such insignificant attempts, there is little wit or satire in the composition, and still less poetry, beyond that which is merely mechanical. The style is highly laboured and involved, abounds with verbal jingle, and is not unfrequently encumbered with rhyme. This is a sufficient proof of its comparatively recent date, and the same inference is authorized by the allusions to the Jangamas and Vaishnavas, who, as here described, are modern sectaries. The composition cannot therefore be earlier than the twelfth century, and it is probably later. The author is named Sankara who could not have been the religious reformer so denominated, although he may possibly be the Sankara Kavi mentioned in the *Sarngdhara Paddhati*. According to the original he was a native of Benares, but the performance is said to have been held at Kolahalapur. *Kolahala* properly speaking, means an uproar, and the city had most probably only an allegorical existence, being also the fancied scene of the events described in the piece.



YAYATI-CHARITA

This is a drama in seven acts by Rudra-Deva. It was first performed at the Spring Festival, but it does not appear at what place, nor does any mention of the author elsewhere occur. He is not likely to be the same as Rudra Bhatta, the author of the *Sringara Tilaka* who is amongst the writers named in the *Sarngdhara Puddhati*.

A prince, named Rudra-Deva, is praised highly for his

liberality in some of the examples quoted by Apyaya Dikshita, in his *Kuvnlaynanda*. Apyaya flourished in the reign of Krishna-Deva of Vijayanagara, about A.D. 1526, and the prince alluded to may possibly be Pratapa-Rudra-Deva, sovereign of Telingana, in the beginning of the fourteenth century. We have also a Rudra, the author, real or supposed, of a vocabulary, whose date appears to be about the same, the thirteenth or fourteenth century. The *Yayati-Charitra* is not quoted by the writers of systems, and only one copy has been met with which is so exceedingly inaccurate that it is nearly unintelligible. As far as the business of the piece can be deciphered, it relates to the intrigue of Yayati with Sarmishtha, terminating in his union with her and reconciliation with his queen Devayani. The story is told as follows in the first section of the *Mahabharata* and several of the Puranas.

Sarmishtha was the daughter of Vrishaparvan, king of the Daityas, and Devayani the daughter of Sukra, regent of the planet Venus and the spiritual preceptor of the Daitya race. Devayani having incurred the displeasure of Sarmishtha, the latter threw the former into a well, where she was found by Yayati, the son of Nahusha. Devayani, on returning to her father, excited his anger, against Vrishaparvan, who to appease Sukra, consented to give his daughter to Devayani as her servant, with a thousand other female attendants. Devayani married the king Yayati. At the time of her marriage Sukra obtained the king's promise that he would never take Sarmishtha to his bed; but after some interval the king meeting her, fell in love with, and espoused her privately. The intrigue continued secret, until Yayati had two sons by Devayani and three by Sarmishtha, when it was discovered by the former, and excited her resentment as well as that of her father. The violation of the king's promise was punished by premature decay, as denounced upon him by Sukra, with permission, however, to transfer his infirmities to any one who would accept them. Yayati appealed to his son; of whom the youngest alone, Puru, consented to assume the burthen. After a sufficient period Yayati took his decrepitude back again, and left the sovereignty of the world to Puru in reward of his filial piety. All the sons of Yayati were the founders of distinguished races. Yadu gave birth to the Yadavas, Turvasu to the Yavanas, Druhya was the ancestor of the Bhojas, and Anu of the Mlechchhas. The Pauravas were the descendants of Puru, in whose line the Kaurava and Pandava families were comprised.

DUTANGADA OR THE MISSION OF ANGADA

This piece is styled a *Chhaya-Nataka*, the shade or outline of a drama, the subject of which is taken from the *Ramayana*. It

consists of but four scenes. In the first, Angada, the son of Bali, is sent to demand Sita; in the second, he executes his mission, and on his departure Ravana goes forth to battle. Two Gandharvas then enter, and in a short speech each announce that Ravana is slain, on which Rama enters in triumph. The composition was perhaps intended to introduce a spectacle of the battle and procession, as it is otherwise difficult to conceive what object its extreme conciseness could have effected. It is said to have been written for the *yatra* of Kumara-Pala-Deva, by order of Tribhuvana-Pala-Deva by the poet Subhata.

MRIGANKALEKHA

This is a piece of the class termed *Natika*, in four acts, by Viswanatha, the son of Trimala-Deva, originally from the banks of Godavari, but residing at Benares, where the piece was represented at the *yatra*, or festival, of Visweswara, the form under which Siva is particularly worshipped at that city.

Mrigankalekha is the daughter of the king of Kamarupa, or Assam; she has been beheld by Karpuratslaka, king of Kalinga, whilst hunting, and the parties are mutually enamoured. The obstacle to their union is the love of Sankhapala, a demon, to oppose whose supernatural agency the minister of the king of Kalinga, who alone is aware of the circumstance, invites to the palace a benevolent magician, Siddayogini, and Mrigankalekha is also lodged in the palace as the friend of the queen Vilasavati. Notwithstanding these precautions, she is carried off by Sankhapala to the temple of Kali, when the Raja wandering disconsolate beyond his garden-bounds, comes to the spot, rescues her, and kills Sankhapala. He is then united to Mrigankalekha in the presence of her father and brother, and with the consent of his queen, killing also, before the conclusion of the rite, the brother of Sankhapala, who comes to revenge him in the form of a wild elephant, but is encountered and slain by the king.

The author of this play is largely indebted to his predecessors for the story, incidents, and the thoughts of his play. The union of the king and Mrigankalekha is effected through the secret contrivance of the minister Ratnachuda, because the lady's husband is to become the master of the world. This is taken from the *Ratrivali*. The conveyance of the princess to the temple of Kali, and her rescue by the king, are borrowed from the *Malari* and *Madhava*; and the site of the temple, and the appearance of the goblins, are described to precisely the same purpose, but with inferior power. During the Raja's peregrinations in his love-frenzy, he passes through a wood, in which he inquires of different animals if they have seen his mistress, in

ABHIRAMAMANI

This is a drama in seven acts, the subject of which is the story of Rama. The business is related in much the same order as in the *Vira-Charitra* and *Murari-Nataka*. This piece was performed also like the latter of these two works at Jagannath, at the festival of Purushottoma or Vishnu. The author is named Sandara-Misra, but we have no further knowledge of him. Of two copies consulted, one bears what appears to be the date of the composition, Saka 1521 or A. D. 1599. The composition possesses little dramatic, although it has some literary, merit.

MAOHURANIRUODHA

This is a drama in eight acts, the subject of which is the secret loves of Usha, the daughter of the Asura Bana, and Aniruddha, the grandson of Krishna, and the defeat and death of the former by that divinity.

In the first act Narada apprises Krishna and Balarama, that Indra is again in dread of the power of the demons, and especially of Bana, who has acquired the particular favour of Siva, and who is therefore not to be easily subdued. The conference ends by Narada's going to Sonapur, the capital of the demon, to endeavour to impair the friendship between Bana and Siva, whilst Krishna and his brother await the result.

In the second act we learn from a conversation between Jaya and Virabhadra, attendants on Parvati and Siva, that the excessive arrogance of Bana, in his anxiety to match himself with Vishnu, has offended the latter, who has accordingly departed for Kailasa, after announcing that Bana's anxiety shall be alleviated whenever his banner falls. Parvati also has gone to Kailasa, after announcing to Usha that she will shortly behold her husband. Usha and Chitrangada are presently afterwards introduced, and in the conversation that ensues, the former expresses her impatience for the boon conferred by the goddess.

In the third act Aniruddha and his friend Vakulanka inform the audience, that the former is violently enamoured of a damsel he has seen in his sleep, and despairs of discovering who she is, when Narada comes opportunely to his aid, and informs him that she is the daughter of Bana: on which Aniruddha determines to go to his capital, first propitiating Jwalamukhi by penance, in order to obtain the means of entering a city surrounded by a wall of perpetual flame.

The fourth act is one of mere conversation again, between Bana, his minister and his wife. The banner has fallen, and they endeavour to prevail on him to propitiate Siva, in order to avert the evil omen, but he refuses.

In the fifth act Aniruddha repairs to the shrine of Jwalamukhi, and upon the point of offering himself as a sacrifice, is

prevented by the goddess, and receives from her the power of travelling through the air. Jwalamukhi is the form of Durga worshipped wherever a subterraneous flame breaks forth or wherever jets of carburetted hydrogen gas are emitted from the soil. A celebrated place of this description exists in India near Nadoun, and that this is the shrine intended by the author is apparent, from the direction taken by Bhringin, a servant of Durga who precedes Aniruddha, to prepare the goddess to grant his request. As he proceeds in his aerial car he notices the countries of Orissa, Bengal, Behar, Oude or Ayodhya, Prayaga, Hastinapur or Delhi and Kurujingala or Tahneser, whence he comes to Jwalamukhi. Aniruddha's visit to the goddess is something unusual in dramatic composition, and characteristic of a prevailing form of the Hindu religion some few centuries ago, that of the ritual prescribed by the Tantras. In his description of the shrine, and the sports of the goblins who surround it, the author has imitated the *Malati* and *Madhava*.

In the next act Usha and Chitralekha receive a visit from Narada, in whose presence the latter unfolds a picture containing portraits of all the chief characters in Swarga, Patala and on earth, or Indra, and other gods, Sesha, Takshaka and the Nagas, and different princes, as the kings of Magadha, Mathura, Avanti, Madra, Mahishmati, and Vidarbha, Yudhishtira, Krishna, Baladeva, Pradyumna, and finally Aniruddha, whom Usha recognizes as the individual seen in her dream, and of whom she is enamoured. Narada recommends Chitralekha being sent to Dwaravati to invite Aniruddha, whom he enables to fly thither, whilst he remains in charge of Usha, whom he sends to the garden to await her lover's arrival.

The seventh act brings Aniruddha and Chitralekha to Sonapur, and the former is united to his mistress.

The eighth describes the detection of Aniruddha by Bana and the engagement that ensues, in a dialogue between Narada and Parvata, Krishna, Baladeva, and Pradyumna coming to the aid of the prince, the day is going ill with Bana, when Karttikeya, Ganesa, and Siva and Chandi come to his succour. The author, who is a Saiva, gives the advantage to the sons of Siva, but the *Vishnu* and *Bhagavata Puranas* tell the story very differently, and subject the Saivas to rather severe treatment, the legend being apparently founded on some hostile conflict between the followers of Siva and Krishna. The dramatist is obliged to admit, that notwithstanding the presence of his allies, Bana has all his thousand arms cut off by Krishna except four. Siva advances to the aid of his votary, when a combat ensues between the gods which Brahma descends to arrest. They embrace, whilst Parvati and Brahma support Bana to make his submission. The parties enter, when Vishnu declares he is less sensible of the wounds inflicted by Bana, than of the regret he feels at his

presumption in contending with Siva. The latter consoles him by telling him he only did a warrior's duty and that military prowess is independent of all motives of love or hatred. Parvati then brings Usha to the spot, and by her desire and that of Siva, Bana gives his daughter to Aniruddha. Siva then elevates him to the rank of one of his attendants under the name of Mahakala and the piece concludes with the wish of Aniruddha, that the fame of the verses of the bard may endure as long as the universe.

The *Madhuraniruddha* is the work of Chandra Sekhara the son of Gopinatha, the religious preceptor of a prince who is celebrated for his encouragement of literature and his victories over the Mlechchhas. His name is said to be Vira, with the epithet Kesarin, which being synonymous with Simha, the prince intended is probably Vira-Simha, the Raja of Bundelkhand, who flourished in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The piece was represented at a festival in honour of Siva and the author is a decided Saiva although he has chosen a Vaishnava hero. We have no further information respecting the writer. The piece abounds too much with description to be a good play, the style has considerable merit.

KAMSA BADHA

A Drama, in seven acts, the subject of which is the destruction of Kamsa by Krishna.

In the first act, Kamsa, king of Mathura, alarmed by a voice from heaven, that the son of his sister, predestined to destroy him, has escaped the precautions taken against his birth, consults with his minister what he shall do, and upon his advice orders all Brahmans and holy and religious characters to be seized or slain and all sacred and pious observance to cease. In the second act, Garga the Muni relates to Talajangha, an emissary of the minister, the different exploits of the juvenile Krishna and the latter also witnesses the destruction of the demon Kesin, one of those infernal beings who in vain attempted to kill the divine child, instigated by their prescience of their fate when he should reach maturity. The third act is occupied with a dialogue between Akrura and his Charioteer, the former being on his way to Gokula, to invite Krishna to Mathura. The fourth act opens with what the author terms a *Prastavana* an introductory dialogue between a staff bearer and an astrologer, respecting the object of Akrura's journey. Balarama and Krishna then make their appearance, attended by Sudaman and Akrura, and accompanied by their foster parents, Nanda and Yasoda, who take leave of the children. The latter play the part of mutes and, after bowing to the elders and receiving their benediction, depart. The seniors then express their grief for their loss, and quit the

stage ; after which we have the boys again, as proceeding on their journey, till they are overtaken by a messenger from Radha, in consequence of which Krishna determines to spend sometime at Vrindavana. The fifth act conveys them to Kamsa's palace at Mathura, describing the different occurrences on the road as related in the *Bhagavata* and similar works. The first part of the sixth act consists of a dialogue between a *Vetradhara* and the *Koshthapula*, a staff-bearer and the chief of the police, describing the combat of the youths with the royal elephant of Kanisa, after the death of which they retire to make way for Balarama and Krishna, with Kamsa's two wrestlers, Chanura and Mushtika. After some conversation between them and a few specimens of their skill, the former speakers resume the dialogue, and describe the defeat and death of the athlete, which they go off to report to Kamsa. We have then partly in action, and partly in narrative, the death of that prince, which ends the sixth act. The seventh act re-unites the boys with their mortal parents, Vasudeva and Devaki ; and to console the latter for her brother's death, Krishna installs her father Ugrasena in the sovereignty of Mathura.

This drama is consequently nothing more than a re-set of the tenth section of the *Bhagavata Purana*, which gives an account of the early life of the last incarnation of Vishnu as Krishna. It is, in fact, little else than the same work thrown into dialogue, and the character of it is chiefly narrative and descriptive. There is little action, and what there is, is inartificially and disjointedly put together. The language is in general good, although highly elaborate. The compounds are interminable and of constant recurrence, which is sufficient to establish the comparatively modern date of the play. The same may be inferred from the conjectural identification of the persons connected with the composition of the drama.

The author is called Krishna-Kavi, the son of Nrisimha ; he is also termed Sesha-Krishna-Pandita, the first of which appellations indicates a Mahratta original. With respect to the latter, there is a Krishna-Pandita, of the Benares School of grammar, author of a commentary on the *Prakriya-Kaumudi*, an abridgement of which, the *Tattva-Chandra*, was completed by one of his pupils, Jayanta, in the year 1687 (A. D. 1631). The patron of the author and person who presides in the assembly is styled, "the sovereign upholding Govardhana, the son of Todar, the ornament of the race of Tandana, and whose Guru was Girdharinath." Girdharinath was the grandson of Vallabha, the founder of the Gokulastha Gosains, who flourished early in the sixteenth century, and Todar may have been Akbar's financial minister, Todar Mal. The drama was performed at a festival held at Benares in honour of Visweswara ; and it seems not improbable, therefore, that it was written about two centuries

ago, or in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when Krishna-Pandita, the preceptor of Jayanta, might easily be contemporary with the son of Todar Mal, and a grandson of Vallabha-Acharya.

PRADYUMNA VIJAYA

This is a drama in seven acts, the subject of which is the victory of Pradyumna, the son of Krishna, over Vajranabha, the sovereign of the Daityas. The story is, in fact, taken with servile fidelity from the *Hansamsha*, the last section of the *Mahabharata* and the incidents, as there narrated, are dramatised without addition or omission.

The chief personages of the play, as of the poem, are demigods and demons and the Yadavas, or kinsmen of Krishna and his son. We have also in the former, as in the latter, the pair of geese, the *Hansa* and *Hamsi*, who inspire Prabhavati, the daughter of Vajranabha, and Pradyumna with a mutual passion before they have beheld each other, and who contrive their secret nuptials. The introduction of such performers on the stage must have had rather an extraordinary effect, although not more so than the *Birds* and *Wasps* of Aristophanes, or the *Io* of Aeschylus who, as the dialogue sufficiently proves, were dressed in character.

The stolen interviews of the lovers being communicated by Narada to the father, Pradyumna is about to fall a victim to his vengeance, when Krishna and Baladeva with their followers come to his rescue, and a combat ensues, in which Vajranabha is defeated and slain. The whole of this engagement, occupying the entire last act, is described by two Gandharbas, as supposed to be seen by them from their chariots in the air. Other portions of the piece are in narrative to a very considerable extent, the subject of which is foreign to the business, as the wars of the gods and demons, the rape of Rambha by Ravana and the destruction of Kama by Siva. The action is also frequently interrupted by laboured and tedious descriptions of the hours of the day and seasons of the year, in the usual backhanded strain. The style, although elaborate, is not remarkably beautiful, and there is no imagination in the thoughts. The play is the work of a Pandit, not of a poet.

The author of the *Pradyumna Vijaya* is named Sankara Dikshita, the son of Bala Krishna Dikshita the son of Dhundhi-Raja. The date of the composition is fixed at about the middle of the last century, having been written for performance at the coronation of Sabha-Simha, the Raja of Pannah who was the son of Hridaya Simha, and grandson of the celebrated Chatra-Sal, Raja of Bundelkhand.

SRI-DAMA-CHARITA

This is a play in five acts, the subject of which is taken from the tenth section of the *Bhagavata* and is the elevation of Sridaman (or, as written more frequently, Sudaman), the early companion and fellow student of Krishna, to sudden and unexpected affluence, by the regard of that deity and in requital of Sridaman's attachment. The story, which is not uninteresting in its original form attracted the taste of Sir William Jones and forms part of his Hymn to Lakshmi the goddess of wealth and fortune.

The opening of the piece is in the style of our ancient moralities and in the first act Poverty and Folly are sent to assail Sridaman, who is obnoxious to Lakshmi for his attachment to Saraswati or, in other words who prefers learning to house and lands for Fortune it is said, will not even glance upon the pious and wise, but flies them in proportion as they are devoted to philosophy and virtue. On the other hand, Krishna or Vishnu employs the same agents to recover those whom Fortune has corrupted. Folly, entering into their hearts, prepares the way for Poverty, and when reduced to distress, their minds are weaned from worldly affections, and they are fitted for heaven. These allegorical personages effect their purpose with Sridaman, by demanding the rites of hospitality, and being accordingly admitted into his dwelling.

In the second act Sridaman is persuaded by his wife, Vasumati, who has seen a propitious dream, to repair to Krishna, to see if his opulent friend will restore his broken fortunes. He takes with him a handful of rice, dried and cleaned after boiling, as a present.

The third act conducts Sridaman to the palace of Krishna, where he is received with great respect by that divinity and his two principal wives Rukmini and Satyabbama, the former washes his feet, the latter wipes them, and Krishna sprinkles the remaining water upon his own head. After recalling some of the occurrences of their juvenile days, when they were fellow students Krishna leads his friend into the garden where they remain till towards sun-set, Krishna, Sridaman, the Vidushaka, Galava, and the gardener, striving who shall utter the most tedious descriptions of the beauties of the place and the decline of the sun, when they are summoned to join the queens and their attendants.

The greater portion of the next act is occupied with representation of Krishna's frolics amongst his women, and the buffoonery of the Vidushaka, partly in action, partly in description, Sridaman and Galava his disciple being spectators, and occasionally taking a part in the dialogue. After some time spent in this manner, Sridaman takes his leave, and, although

dismissed with great reverence, departs as poor as he came. He recollects this on his way back, and consoles himself with observing, that wealth intoxicates as well as wine, and that the affection of Krishna is a thing which no one can steal from him. His disciple is not so submissive, and reminds him that it was not to get mere civility that he was sent on this errand by his wife. When they approach their residence, they find instead of the miserable hovel of Sridaman, a splendid and extensive town, and Sridaman is in great affliction at the disappearance of his wife, when he is seen and solicited by a *Kanchukin* or chamberlain, who calls himself his servant, to enter a stately palace. Sridaman thinking this is a jest upon his poverty threatens to beat him if he does not depart, but the chamberlain perseveres and tells him that whilst he was absent Krishna has converted his cottage into a town, named after him Sridamapura and supplied it with every article of use or luxury. With much reluctance and unyielding incredulity Sridaman is prevailed upon to enter the palace.

The last act brings Krishna to pay a visit to his friend. He arrives in his aerial chariot accompanied by Satyabhama and the Vidusbaka, and his bounties are duly acknowledged by the object on whom they have been bestowed.

There is too much description and too little action in this piece to constitute a good play, but there is some vivacity in the thoughts, and much melody in the style. It is a modern* work, the composition of Sama-Raja-Dikshita, the son of Narabari-Dikshita, and was written for the amusement of Ananda-Raya, a petty Raja in Bundelkhand. This family of the Dikshitas, a race of Maharatta Brahmans, has continued its dramatic studies to the present day, and to a descendant of the author of this drama, Lalla-Dikshita, I am indebted for the manuscript of the *Mrichchhakati*, and for very valuable assistance in the translation of that and several other pieces in this collection. Lalla-Dikshita is the only Brahman I ever met with who might be considered conversant with the dramatic literature of the Hindus.

DHURTA-NARTAKA

A Farce in one act, or two *Sandhis* or portions, by Samaraja-Dikshita, the author of the preceding play, written for performance at a festival in honour of Vishnu. The chief object of this piece is the ridicule of the Saiva ascetics, one of whom Mureswara, is represented in love with a dancing girl. His two pupils, to whom he communicates his passion after swearing them to secrecy by making them swallow some sea water, endeavour to anticipate him, and being prevented by his vigilance, seek to expose him, by bringing him before Papachara, a king. The king, however, makes light of his offence, and at the inter-

cession of others of the fraternity, who are of great credit in his kingdom, allows him to retain possession of the damsel. The satire is levelled at the assumption of the ascetic character by improper persons, and the king's confidant proclaims Mureswara a *Yavana* or Mohammedan. In a dialogue also with a brother saint the same idea is conveyed.

'Mureswara (Pointing to Papa) who is that ?

Krishnananda My well-beloved disciple

Mur His caste ?

Krish A weaver

Mur What other followers have you ?

Krish Many, but what need you inquire ? Behold, Yavanas, Sudras, potters, weavers, plowmen, cowherds, vendors of liquors, and harlots out of number, are accomplished in their course of pupilage by simply whispering into their ears."

The piece is, of course, of the same date as the preceding. The language is highly laboured, but there is little fancy or humour in the composition. It has, however, the recommendation of being exempt from gross indecency, the prevailing blemish of the class to which it belongs.

DHURTA-SAMAGAMA

The only manuscript of this met with is incomplete at the beginning and end, and consequently the name of the author does not appear. It is somewhat indelicate but not devoid of humour. Viswanagara, a *Jangam* or mendicant of a particular class, quarrels with his disciples for the possession of Ananeasena, a courtesan. They refer the case to Asajjati Misra, a Brahman, who lives by solving knotty points of laws, and who decrees that until it can be decided to which the damsel belongs, she shall remain under the protection of himself as umpire.

HASYARNAVA

A comic piece in two acts. It is a severe, but grossly indelicate satire upon the licentiousness of Brahmans assuming the character of religious mendicants. It satirises also the encouragement given to vice by princes, the inefficiency of ministers, and the ignorance of physicians and astrologers. The King, Anayashindhu, in his progress through his city, regrets to find everything subverted, that Chandalas, not Brahmans, make shoes, that wives are chaste and husbands constant, and that respect is paid to the respectable, not to the vile. He stops at the house of a courtesan, where the rest of the characters assemble. Viswabhabha in the garb of a Saiva mendicant, Kalahankura, his disciple and who fights for the possession of a courtesan Vyadhisindhu, the doctor, who cures the choleric by

heated needle to the palate, and perforates the pupil of the eye in order to restore vision. Sadhuhimasa, the chief of Police, who reports with great satisfaction that the city is completely in the hands of thieves. the commander-in-chief, Ranajambuka, who after putting on his armour has valiantly cut a leech in two; and Mahayatriki the astrologer, who, in answer to a question of the time to take a journey, indicates hours and positions which, according to Hindu belief, proclaim approaching death. The king leaves the party at the end of the first act, the second is occupied with the dispute between the ascetic and his pupil, which they refer to the decision of Mahanindaka, another Brahman, who asserts that he composed the Vedas and visited Swarga, where he treated Vrishaspiti and Brahma with contempt, and gave Siva a drubbing. These notices will convey some idea of the composition. It is the work of a Pandit named Jagadisa, and was represented at the vernal festival, but where, or when, it is not known. The Physician, amongst his authorities, named Vagbhata, a medical writer, subsequent to those who may be considered the fathers of the science, and who is therefore perhaps comparatively modern. The class of Brahmins aimed at also is that of the Kaula, Kulina, or Vamacharin, or left-handed sect, the practices of which, as reduced to a system, are not likely to be of any antiquity.

KAUTUMA SARVASWA

This is also a *Prahasana* or Farce in two acts, and is especially a satire upon princes who addict themselves to idleness and sensuality, and fail to patronise the Brahmins. The hero is Kalivatsala, or the darling of the age of iniquity, he is sovereign of Dharmanasa, or the destruction of virtue, and he takes as his spiritual guide, Kukarmaponchanana, the Siva of iniquity. Satyacharya a pious Brahman returned from Vrindavana, who is treated by the king and his courtiers with great indignity, holds the following conversation with his brethren in jail.

Satya How now, holy sirs, how fares it with ye?

Brah We once had lands in free gilt

Satya What then?

Brah Why, know you not the customs of this country? If the god of wealth owned lands here that yielded but a grain of corn, the king would send him in three days to beg alms, clad in tatters and with a platter in his hand. The characteristics of our sovereign are love of untruth, passion for other men's wives, fondness for the intoxicating juice of *bhang*, esteem for the wicked, addiction to vice, and detestation of virtue.

Satya You say right. What chance is there for the good? The king is unwise, his associates are wicked, his chief

* councillor is a knave, and his minister a scoundrel Yet the people are many, why is not such misconduct resented?

Brah The manners of the people are equally depraved, they are valiant in oppression, skilful in falsehood and persevering only in contempt for the pious

Satya How are the scribes?

Brah They collect the revenues by* any expedient, and vigilantly inflict penalties on the wise The Brahmans are not allowed to keep even the dust upon their bodies, the dust accumulated on their feet is claimed by the Kayasthas What can we say of this reign? The dumb alone can speak truth, the deaf hear the law, the sons of barren are well behaved, the blind behold the observance of the Scriptures

Satya Why do not men of merit quit the country?

Brah Our dwellings have been given to courtesans, our lands to drunkards, and we are detained in prison for what our ancestors expended

Satya I have heard enough It is sinful to hold any communication with the profane Better fortune attend you

There is some bitterness in this, and there is also some humour, in the piece, especially at the expense of the General, Samara-Jambuka, the jackall of war, who boasts that he can cleave a roll of butter with his falchion, and is said to tremble from top to toe at the approach of a mosquito There is also some rather bold censure of the immoralities of the *Puranas*

Dharma What says the law? 'Thou shall not commit adultery'

Kukarma The languages of fools So much of the law as the sages and gods themselves observed, be our guide, not such commands as they contemned, like this Indra deceived the wife of Gautama, Chandra carried off the bride of his Guru, Yama enjoyed the spouse of Pandu in her husband's shape, and Madhava debauched the wives of all the cowherds of Vrindavana Those conceited fools, the Pandits, imagining themselves sages, alone have made this a sin

Dharma But this is the precept of the Rishis How answer you to that?

Kukarma They were impostors Becoming too old to relish pleasure, they condemned it, and out of envy forbade to others what they could no longer enjoy themselves

All Very true very true! We never heard such orthodox doctrine before

In consequence of this and similar decisions, the king orders vice to be proclaimed virtue by beat of drum, and the piece concludes with the perpetual banishment of all the Brahmans

There is more burour in this than any of the other Farces, and less indecency, although it is not wholly free from the ordinary fault of these attempts at wit. Hindu Comedy, however, is not worse than the old Comedy of the Greeks in this respect. And the indelicacy is attributable, in some degree, to the constitution of society in both instances, and the exclusion of women from public entertainments.

The *Kautaka Saraswata* is the composition of a Pandit named Gopinatha. The date is not known, but it is not likely to be ancient, as it was written for representation at the autumnal festival of the Durga Puja a ceremony peculiar to the province of Bengal and no doubt, as there practised, of comparatively modern institution.

CHITRA YAJNA

A Drama in five acts, the subject of which is the celebrated legend of Daksha. The first act describes the assemblage of the gods and sages on the occasion of the sacrifice, and their reception by Daksha. The dialogue is curiously imperfect, being left to be supplied by the performer, partly after the fashion of the *Comedia a Soggetto* of the Italian Theatre before Goldoni. Thus at the end of the first act, the stage direction is "Daksha bows down to the feet of the gods, and puts the *oust* from under them upon his head, after which he propitiates them fully in the spoken dialect, and then proceeds to the place of sacrifice, reading or reciting the usual *formula*, and followed by the Rishis." And the second act opens with the stage direction "Daksha enters, takes his seat, and orders the attendants to distribute rice to the Brahmans, for the purpose of invoking their benediction. They receive the rice, scatter it, and pronounce the *swastirachana*, or benedictory text."

The whole ceremonial of the oblation to fire is then represented contrary to the received rule, which prohibits the dramatic exhibition of sacred rites. Even some of the *mantras* are given, as *swaha agnaye*, oblation to Agni or fire &c. After these ceremonies, Dadhichi comes to the sacrificer, when a dispute ensues between him and Daksha, upon the unpropriety of omitting to invite Siva, and the dispute becoming rather warm, Daksha orders his guest to be turned out, which closes the second act.

The third act contains little more than directions for the business. The gods partake Dadhichi's indignation at the disrespectful mention of Siva, and rise to depart. Daksha orders his servants to guard the door and prevent their going forth, the gods, however, force their way. The Munis then also withdraw, on which Daksha goes out, exclaiming he will give double

the 'usual presents to those who remain Narada follows him, announcing his purpose of going to Kailasa with the news The next scene represents Siva and Bhavani, to whom Narada comes to tell them what has occurred "He enters playing the *veena* and singing hymns in honour of Mahadeva", one of which, of some length is given Narada's communication is very brief

Siva Now Narada, whence come you?

Nara Your godship is omniscient, you know all that has happened, but have asked me through a wish to hear it from my lips We were all invited to Daksha's sacrifice. Dadhichi finding that you were not included, took Daksha to task pretty sharply, and walked on upon which I came to pay you my respects

This having said and prostrated himself on the ground the Muni Narada, with his lute hanging on his neck, again departed from Kailasa mountain

Passages of narrative being occasionally interspersed in this manner with the dialogue and stage direction This ends the act The author treats Siva and Bhavani as Puff does the condante, and leaves them to get off the stage as they can, or rather it is to be supposed that they remain on, as they begin the fourth act The goddess asks leave to go and see her father Siva replies, it is quite contrary to etiquette to go without an invitation She replies, she need not stand on ceremony with her father when Siva addresses her rather uncivilly, but to the usual purport of Pauranik mysticism "How! would you impose upon me with falsehoods? Daksha is not your father, nor is his wife your mother You are the father of all things, the mother of the universe Those versed in the *Vedas* declare you male and female too" The discussion on this subject occupies the rest of the act, and ends like most matrimonial debates in the lady's being allowed to follow her own inclinations

In the fifth act Sati comes to her father, and vainly endeavours to impress him with respect for her husband She quits him to throw herself into the sacrificial fire, which of course is left to the language of description Narada then makes his appearance, and tells Daksha to prepare for the consequences of his folly Virabhadra, Siva's attendant then enters and plays some antics to represent the treatment this being is described to have inflicted on the assistants at the sacrifice "Shaking the earth with his tread, and filling space with his extended arms, he rolls his eyes in wrath Some of the gods he casts on the ground and tramples on them, he knocks out the teeth of some with his fists, plucks out the beards of some, and cuts off the ears, arms, and noses of others, some he smites double, and others he tosses into the sacrificial fire", and ends by decapitating the cause of his master's indignation, the helpless Daksha

The heterogeneous composition is the work of a Pandit of Nadiya, Vaidyanatha-Vachaspati Bhattacharya, and was composed for the festival of Govinda by desire of Iswara Chandra, the Raja of Nadiya, about twenty or thirty years ago. It is so far valuable as conveying a notion of the sort of attempts at dramatic composition made by the present race of Hindus in Bengal. The *Yatras* or *Jatras*, which are occasionally represented in the Bengali language, follow the plan of the *Chitra-Yajna*, with still less pretension to a literary character. They are precisely the *improvvisata commedia* of the Italians, the business alone being sketched by the author, and the whole of the dialogue, supplied by the actors. The dialogue is diversified by songs, which are written and learnt by heart. Some improvements, however, have been made of late years in the representation of the performance; the details of the story are more faithfully and minutely followed, and part of the dialogue is composed and taught by the author to the actors.

CHAPTER VIII

THEATRE ARCHITECTURE IN ANCIENT INDIA*

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Books are not silent as to the nature of the theatre crafts ... Ancient India. There is ample evidence to show that the names *rangabhumi* and *natakasala* connote not 'some sort of architectural structures' but well planned, well built, decorated, beautiful theatres. The types and the details of construction of the Indian theatres in olden times may be known by a reference to the Sanskrit sources. This article proposes to examine the available Sanskrit texts on Theatre Architecture.

Dance and Music were highly evolved Court arts in Ancient India. They were not the folk art to be shown on the streets or near the village shrines. The palaces contained separate halls for *Natya*. The *Malavika Agnimitra* of Kalidasa furnishes us the information that the palace of the King had a *chitrasala* (painting hall) and a *prekshagara* (a hall for witnessing *Natya*). It is in this *prekshagara* that Malavika's dance is presented. There can be no mistaking this place to be a mere a hall or 'some sort of architectural structure'. It is a perfect *natyasaala* there being mention of the green room and the curtain. In act V of the *Sakuntala* it is said that Hamsapadika, the King's quondam sweetheart is singing in the *sangitasala*. Saradatanaya in his work on Dramaturgy, *Bhavaprakasa* describes three types of theatres in the palace of the king, each for the presenting of a different kind of dance. At the beginning of his work he says that he wrote the hook on seeing thirty different kinds of dramas presented by one Divakara from whom he learnt the *natyaveda*. This Saradatanaya is assigned to AD 1175-1250. Narada's *Sangita makaranda* a work on Music, describes one type of theatre, giving its measurements etc. The *Vishnudharmottara* describes two types of theatres. Above all we have Bharata's *Natyasastra* the earliest work on Drama devoting one whole chapter to Theatre Architecture.

* Written in 1931 and published in the *Triveni*, Madras, Vol iv No 6 Nov-Dec 1931, pp 69-77. Slightly revised here.

Chapter II of the *Natyasastra* gives three types of theatres, each again divided into three kinds according to their size and gives also measurement etc, for each of these

The verses in Chapter II, of the *Natyasastra* are confusing in some places. The great commentary on the *Natyasastra* by Acarya Abhinavagupta helps us a good deal in understanding Bharata. Keith's *Sanskrit Drama* towards the end, contains a small section on stage architecture according to Bharata, but the account there is very meagre and sometimes mistaken also. Godavari A. Ketkar has produced a study of the *Natyasastra*, the use of which book, however, is little to those who do not know Marathi in which it is written. Still those who want to have an idea of the types of theatres in Ancient India may derive much benefit by referring to the very useful diagrams of Bharata's theatres given by Ketkar in her book.

The sages request Bharata to speak of the theatre, it being the first requisite in *Natyā*. Bharata says that the learned Visvakarman devised three types of theatres according to the *Sastras* viz., *vikrashta*, i.e., rectangular, *chaturasra* i.e., square, and *tryasta*, i.e., triangular. Keith does not say what the *vikrashta* means and wrongly takes the second, the *chaturasra*, as 'rectangular'. Each of these three again falls into three kinds according to size: *biggest*, *middle-sized*, and *small*. Keith misses this second classification. Of these three, i.e., biggest, middle sized, and small, Bharata, for the sake of good acoustic effect, asks us to choose the middle-sized. A reading of the verses here would give the idea that the biggest is for the *Devas*, the middle-sized for kings, and the small for the people. Bharata asks us not to vie with the *Devas* and their very big theatres, because we mortals must build with great trouble while they do things by mere wish. So Bharata recommends the middle sized theatre to us. Ahunava's commentary here gives original interpretation. We are unable to decide whether that is Bharata's idea, but Ahunava gives us additional information, namely, that if Bharata assigns the biggest theatre to the *Devas*, it means that we should resort to the biggest to enact such kinds of dramas as the *Drama* in which occur fights between the *Devas* and the *Asuras* and consequently much space is wanted. If we have to enact the romances of a king's private life, the middle sized theatre is enough for our purpose. We must go to the small theatre who we intend staging such plays as the monologue, *Bhana* play, in which ordinary men and women are characters.

The biggest measures 108 *hastas* or 54 yards, the middle-sized 64 h or 32 yds, and the small 32 h or 16 yds. These may be of the shape of a rectangle or square or triangle. Bharata then picks out the middle-sized which he has already praised.

as the best from all points of view and gives its dimensions, dividing it into three according to shape, namely, rectangular square, and triangular. The rectangular should be 64 h long, 32 wide. This space should be divided into two, giving two squares, 32×32 . The front square should be made into the audience-hall. The other square should again be divided into two halves of 16×32 each. Of these two portions, the front half 16×32 should be made into two halves measuring 8×32 each. An eight-hastas square at the centre of the back half of these two portions should be made into the *rangasirsha**. The front half 8×32 should have at the centre *rangapitha* i.e., the stage proper, measuring 8×16 leaving at both the sides two verandahs of 8 h square. The portion measuring 16×32 remaining at the back of the *rangasirsha* should be made into the *nepathyagriha* the green room with two doorways. The bewildering nature of this part of the *Natyasastra* is plain when we see Abhinava giving numerous and differing views all over, the chapter. Here especially he gives three other opinions of other scholars describing the measurements of the green room, the *rangasirsha* and the *rangapitha* in three different ways. Abhinava himself bewilders us by giving a measurement of 64×64 h which will mean a square theatre, though Bharata is speaking here of a rectangular theatre, 64×32 h. There should be two doorways to the green-room. The *rangasirsha* is to be a little higher, and here it is that the actors make offerings and *puja* before the drama begins and wait during the drama when they have dressed themselves up. Abhinava says that if the stage is imagined as a man lying on his back, this space called 'the head of the stage' will look like his head.

The *chatusrastra* measures 32 h on both sides. In this type the *rangapitha* is smaller naturally. The entrance to the green-room should be only one. In other respects, the construction of this type should follow the instructions given as regards the rectangular. Just as in the rectangular type, the stage proper is also rectangular, in the square type the stage proper is square.

Theo Bharata describes a *tryasra*—triangular theatre. The speciality to be noted in its construction is that the *rangapitha* here is triangular and has an entrance into the green room at its back angle.

As regards the entrance gates to the audience-hall, Abhinava says that they may be three perhaps one on each side. In the rectangular, 'the head of the stage' is a little higher than the 'stage proper' while in the square both are on the same level.

As regards the size and measurement and types of theatres in general, Abhinava says that altogether eighteen kinds of

* On the *Rangasirsha* see the writer's more detailed remarks in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, IX 4, Dec 1933, pp 991-4

theatres are possible as spoken of in the *Sastras*. Bharata himself says at the end of this chapter that there are many types of theatres and that other types must be constructed by learned men applying the instructions given above.

In a further chapter, Bharata says that we should resort to a rectangular stage to present dances involving much to and-fro movements—*gata agata prachara*, which are impossible on a stage of smaller width. He also says that in the square and the triangular stages the *chaitrasra gati* only is possible.

There is also elaborate treatment of the number of pillars in the various portions of the theatre in each type, how and where they should be raised and what auspicious ceremonies should attend this *stambha sthapana*. Bharata dedicates four main pillars to the four castes even as portions of the whole theatre to the various gods for the sake of protection. Bharata speaks first that a good plot of ground should be chosen and cleared of all grass shrubs, bones, skulls, etc. Music, *pūja* and feast should attend the measurement-ceremony. The erection of the walls is then described. The whole hall must be richly decorated with wood-work, representing creepers, birds, animals etc. The walls must be decorated with beautiful paintings of pictures of pleasure, of men and women and of creepers and trees after the walls have been made smooth and white with *churnam*.

As regards the seating arrangements also, Bharata's theatre was well-designed. He says that the seating arrangements should be in the form of a gallery—*sopanakrīti*. The seats should be either of brick or wood. They should be one and a half feet high above the ground, to give a good view of the *rāngapitha*. The surface of the *rāngapitha* should not be like the *kurmaprīsha* (high at the centre and sloping on all sides like the back of a tortoise), or the *matsyaprīsha* (high along the centre and sloping on both sides like the back of a fish). It should be smooth like the surface of a mirror. Bharata says that the house shall be *du bhumi*. This term is interpreted variously. We may be tempted to take that the house had two storeys and that thus special seats were also provided for in the ancient theatre. But Abhinavā after giving the opinions of other scholars, quotes his own teacher's view and says that what Bharata means by that word is that the seats should be in gallery form, rising from the pit to the height of the *rāngapitha*. But the real import of that term seems to be that the house contains two *bhūmis* the raised platform for the stage and the pit for the audience. Bharata paid due attention to the acoustic properties of the theatre also. He says that 64×32 li is the maximum size for a theatre and that one should not exceed that measurement. He praises the middle-sized alone among the three kinds of houses. The reason he gives is this: "Builders should not build a theatre of a

greater size, for the *Natya* would become indistinct. If the hall should be very big, the actor's voice would either become indistinct or be lost on account of the necessity for the actors to shout out. The colour of the face or the tune of the varying *rasa* and *bhava* would become indistinct owing to the largeness of the house. Therefore, of all halls, the middle-sized is the best, for here the instruments and songs would be heard beautifully well.¹ Again he says that the stage should be like a cave in a mountain without very large windows, so that there might be a clear and audible sound effect. Even the windows should be fitted with apertured doors so that there might not be too much air. In this connection we may observe that Keith's connecting this dictum of Bharata that the hall should look like a cave with the Ramgarh Hill Cave taken to have been once used for recitation etc., does not prove anything.

As regards permanent fittings, if we go through the further chapters of the *Natyaashastra* we see that in this respect also the Ancient Indian theatre was equipped. Such equipment was however limited consequent on the idealism and conventions of the Sanskrit stage, compendiously styled *Natya Dharmi* (See the writer's article on *Natya Dharmi* in the *Journal of Oriental Research* Madras Vols. VII and VIII). The 23rd Chapter deals elaborately with dress, masks, ornamented decorations, painting and shading of faces, beards etc. The introduction of birds and animals according to the situation technically called *Sanjna* is described. Clothes, arms, and accessories made of stitched cloth, wood, metal, mud and wax are then described. Chapter 35 towards the end deals with the workmen, craftsmen, artisans and artists attached permanently to a theatre or a dramatic troupe. The garlander, goldsmith, painter, carpenter, washerman and others are mentioned.

The *Vishnudharmottara* mentions only two types of theatres. It says. "The *Natya* should be presented only in a theatre, and a theatre might be of two kinds, rectangular or square. The square should be 16×16 yds. The theatre should not be too small or too big, for there would be congestion in a small one and the show would become indistinct in a big one." The measurement given here for a rectangular theatre is not clear, the text being corrupt. This work does not mention the triangular theatre.

Narada's *Sangitamakaranda* mentions only the square theatre. It gives a new measurement, that this square theatre should be 48×48 yds. Thus according to Bharata this will perhaps be a *mesha* type. Narada then adds that the *natyasaala* must be richly painted with the eighty-four *bandhas* mentioned in the *Kamasashastra*, or more likely the dance *bandhas* of the *Natyaashastra*, inlaid with innumerable gems of diverse colours and decorated with chowries, flags and festoons. He gives the house four

gates. In the centre there should be a raised platform, beautiful and perfumed, a twelve-yard square, in the middle of which the king's seat should be arranged.

Chapter X of Saradatanaya's *Bhavaprakasa* says that the palace of a king should have three kinds of theatres. This writer omits the rectangular type and has in its place the *tritta*, circular theatre. He opines that the king should have all the three types in his palace, each for a particular kind of dance and audience. He assigns to the circular theatre only the *chutra* variety of the *misra* dance, i.e., the style in which both *marga* and *desi* are mixed. The audience in this theatre should be only giales, consisting, besides the king, of proprietors of other theatres—*para-mantapikas* and the chief citizens. In the square type the audience consist of the king, courtesans, ministers, merchants, commander of the army, friends and the king's sons. Here all sorts of *misra* dance and music could be conducted. In the triangular, the audience with the king include the sacrificial priests, the preceptors, the king's harem and the chief queen. The dance conducted in this theatre should be of the *marga* style only.

The *Sivatattvaratnakara* of Bisavaraja says that King Venkatappa built a theatre at Ikkeri. It describes the grandeur of that theatre, worked in ivory and sandal and inlaid with precious stones, having a garden around it, receiving enough light where it was wanted and with special artificial lighting arrangements in the darker portions. The whole house was beautified with paintings of various themes on the walls that

CHAPTER IX

SOUTH INDIAN THEATRE

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That little tract of land in the south west corner of India which lies snug and secure in the fond embrace of the mighty arms of the *Malaya Parvata* on the one side and the *Pascima Paridhi* on the other, is a unique little area, probably the most self-centred, self-contained in the whole range of this vast peninsula. The creation and the colonisation of this area are, according to local tradition, ascribed to that great Brahmin warrior and inveterate hater of monarchy, Sri Parasurama. This tradition when subjected to a historical scrutiny, can mean only that it was this intrepid warrior who discovered Kerala to the Aryans and introduced into it the Aryan culture and civilisation, and quite consistent with this, our local traditions make him the sole organiser of our *gramams*¹ the primeval founder of our temples, the great systematiser of our rituals, *Vedic* and *Tantric* and *Mantric*, and the earliest architect of our social, religious, and political *Dharma*. The beginnings of the Aryanisation of our culture may go back to a hoary antiquity. True, indeed, we cannot trace its first beginnings and subsequent developments from that remote, dim, shadowy past, through the vast sweep of centuries, but available records and traditions show that, since the dawn of the Christian Era, our culture and civilisation never underwent any convulsions violent enough to bring about any complete metamorphosis. Thanks to her isolated situation and the abundant security that a benign nature conferred upon her, she was never a prey to the ruthless foreign invader, who in the words of the late lamented Prof. Sir William Ridgeway, "wherever they went changed the aspects of the lands they conquered and into which they introduced their own laws and customs and manners!" Such is the case elsewhere in India and especially is it so in Northern India. This does not mean, however, that Kerala was enjoying an isolated seclusion. Even at the earliest period of which we have any record—and this is pre Christian in point of time—our fore-fathers were carrying on a very brisk trade with various countries far and near, and the modern Cranganore figures under various names as the greatest emporium of trade in the whole east, in whose spacious

¹ A *gramam* means a social and religious unit. It is not to be confused with a village. The whole Kerala is divided into sixty-four *gramams*.

harbour could be seen the ships of the Phoenicians, the Egyptians, the Greeks and the Romans from the remote west, and the Malayas, the Chinese and the Papuans from the Far East. But all these came not as invaders, but as peaceful traders and consequently, while everywhere else foreign influence led to culture suppression and culture transformation, in Kerala this led only to culture stratification and culture assimilation. Naturally therefore that vigorous seedling of Aryan culture that was successfully transplanted into the indigenous culture-soil continued to flourish there in all its vigour and vitality and to live and grow into a beautiful tree with brilliant foliage and yielding sweet fruits. Kerala can, therefore, boast for her culture a continuity that is scarcely less interesting than her antiquity. And when it is remembered that this culture was constantly brought into contact with a number of distinct and different cultures one can naturally expect to find here cultural assimilation and cultural superimposition, resulting in a new synthesis of conflicting civilisations. These three facts—antiquity, continuity and culture synthesis—lend to the study of this culture more than a passing interest and importance. Add to this also the existence of a large number of 'genuine primitive survivals' in almost every aspect of our social, religious and political life and one may without exaggeration assert that our cultural antiquities open up a field of inquiry at once interesting and important not merely to a particular section of scientific students but to all alike—to the student of archaeology and anthropology, to the student of art and architecture, to the student of religion and philosophy.

One aspect in which this wide and varied culture has found expression is the subject of the present study—I mean the stage. The Kerala Stage has made its own valuable contribution to the sum of Indian culture. The orthodox section of this stage which has a religious atmosphere attached to it and is therefore, beyond the gaze of profane eyes, plays no inconsiderable role in helping the reconstruction of the ancient Sanskrit stage—the active traditions of which have died out elsewhere in India—and in assisting the elucidation of one of the outstanding problems of Sanskrit Literature of the day—I mean the well known Bhasa problem which has been generally misunderstood on account of the dearth of information regarding our stage practice. No less important is the vernacular section in which beginnings may be found revealed of the art of dramatic representation, beginnings probably primitive in character, but none the less interesting for that. Besides the development of the stage raised the local spoken dialect to the status of a literary language. And the two together present to us a complete picture of our national tastes and cultural temperaments. It would be proper to mention here that the term stage or theatre is used in a very

sense as embracing within it all kinds of spectacular entertainments which are characterised by the appearance in public of one or more persons in costume for the purpose of entertaining the audience and which have some literature connected with it.

INTRODUCTION

(a) *General Features*—In the sense in which the term stage or theatre is here understood, its most outstanding characteristic seems to be the wealth and variety of its forms. The aim of all spectacular, or more correctly, dramatic entertainments is mainly two-fold: to impart instruction and to afford pleasure. The theatre is possibly the surest and certainly the most obvious way of educating the masses. It is again a very powerful instrument of social reform and, no doubt, in olden days it discharged this function as satisfactorily as the press and the platform do in modern days. Besides, in those times the propagation and popularisation of religion constituted one of the main functions of the theatre. And lastly it provides inexhaustible source of delight. According then as the object of the dramatist differs, so does nature of the play. Didactic plays are generally careful of their story, and this, so far as we now can say, has been true of all Sanskrit dramas. Those intended to reform society teem with wit and humour. Religious plays are either allegorical or clothed in an atmosphere of super-naturalism. Proper acting with due regard to naturalness of representation, and dress, music and scenic effect can be met with only in such dramatic works as have pleasure for their main aim. This variety of aims accounts to no little extent for the variety in our spectacular entertainments. We have thus entertainments which have predominantly an educative value, a religious value or an æsthetic value. Thus the Sanskrit section of our theatre has served most effectively to popularise the Hindu religion and philosophy, and with it the language in which they have found expression. It also developed a keen sense of literary appreciation and produced a number of literary works and commentaries which, both in quality and quantity occupy a high position in Sanskrit Letters. Similarly, the vernacular section has by its contribution developed a spoken dialect into a literary language. And it is not too much to say that our stage has got its eloquent appeal to make to the students of literature, both Sanskrit and Malayalam. And furthermore, it can claim an unbroken continuity through the vast sweep of at least a thousand years. On account then of these facts, our theatre becomes an important source of study to all those who aspire to a knowledge of our ancient culture.

Another feature of the Kerala theatre, probably the most outstanding one, which to a great extent distinguishes it from the Tamil, the Telugu, the Kannada or the English stage, as now

known, is the prominence it assigns to actual acting and dancing. Such terms as *Nataka* *Natya* lead weight and authoritativeness to this practice of our stage, for these are suggestive enough of the place that has to be assigned to acting in the presentation of a Sanskrit drama, which is as it were the well-spring of all our indigenous types of vernacular entertainments. The venerable sage Bharata may also be mentioned in this connection in view of the fact that he devotes a large section of his work to the scientific exposition of the art of acting. It is not an exaggeration to say that the numerous dancing postures described by him can find living examples in the wonderfully artistic poses constantly exhibited even to-day by Kerala actors. In view of this, in according to acting and dancing their proper pre-eminence, our theatre is but keeping truer and nearer to the ideals of the ancient Hindu stage tradition.

The third equally important and prominent feature of our theatre is the use, almost exclusive use, of the gesture language of a highly codified and systematised character. This is so prominent a feature that in some varieties this, and not any spoken language, is the only means of expression. The codified gestures which are used as a means of conveying ideas in the various types of entertainments may well be classified under the three heads of— (1) *Natural Gestures*, such as are unconsciously produced and utilised, when the speaker is moved by great emotion or passion. Under this head may be included such gestures as those used for denoting come, go, eat, etc. (2) *Imitative Gestures* which reproduce the shape or some striking peculiarity of the thing or person or being, such for instance as those referring to lion, elephant, tiger, fish, tortoise, etc. (3) *Gestures* resulting from the amplification for secular purposes of the orthodox types of *Tantric* and *Mantric* symbols such as those used for *Aradhana*, *Abhaya Dana*, *Avahana* etc. The original ritualistic symbols must have been amplified for the use of the *Cakjars* in staging Sanskrit Dramas, and thence it must have been extended to the secular varieties. These three varieties which consist of primitive instinctive gesticulations and natural and symbolic representations lend themselves to all sorts of permutations and combinations, and these, when combined and systematised, constitute the code of gesture language, (See Plate Some typical *Mudras*).

It may here be mentioned that even the *Mantric* and *Tantric* symbols must originally have been elaborated from the simple, natural and imitative gestures. It is, therefore, not far fetched to assume that the *Tantric* and *Mantric* symbols must have served as the basis of the gesture language of the stage, later developed by the addition of the imitative and instinctive gestures. And so far at least as the Sanskrit stage is concerned, this gesture language must have been introduced with a view

to popularising the sacred language also. It appears, besides, to have served another practical purpose. An orthodox code requires that Brahmins should not use the profane vernacular during the course of their daily rituals, at the same time it is practically impossible for them to avoid communication with the *Anibalavasis*². Sanskrit could not serve this purpose and the *Namputiris* (Kerala Brahmins) might have developed a simple code of gesture language.

Whatever might have been the motive this device served as an excellent method for helping the illiterate crowd to understand the language of the play and appreciate it better. That this must have been the original motive is also clear from the fact that the code of gestures used by the *Cakyars* is far simpler than that used by the actors of the *Kathakali*. For, in the former the actor has to confine himself to the space between the elbows of his outspread arms, while for the latter the whole space between his extended reach is at his disposal. The larger space available makes the *Kathakali* gestures more graceful and understandable probably so designed to make the code appeal even to the larger crowd of illiterate audiences. The use of gesture language as a means of communication appears to be very old, older than even *Kuttu*. In its beginnings the code must have been very simple and natural and hence easily understandable, and it later became codified and stereotyped as the actors' language. This is a subject that deserves to be studied in detail.

These, then, namely, the abundance of variety, the prominence given to acting and the use of a codified gesture language constitute the peculiar features of our stage, both Sanskrit and

mainly Sanskrit. They are also capable of a classification from the prominence of one or other of the elements of acting, dancing and music. In *Kathakali* and *Kuttu* proper acting occupies the most important place, in *Korattiyattam* and *Mohiniyattam* dancing takes the place of importance, while in *Kayyukottikkali* we have practically only vocal music and a very simple kind of dance.

(c) *Conditions of Staging*—Restrictions imposed upon the actors or acting are very few indeed except in the case of *Kuttu* and *Arsnattam*, and all of them dispense with the necessity for an elaborate stage. Any open space with a small temporary shed used to serve as a stage, and a coloured piece of cloth to serve as a curtain constitute the essential stage accessories. Lighting effect is never attended to, and, as a general rule, there will be but a single big brass lamp, about three feet high with wicks placed on either side. It is also not allowed to spice the representation with any sort of instrumental music. All the music available is what is produced on *Asura Vadjas* and what is supplied by the vocal music of the actors or the singers themselves. The absolutely primitive nature of the accompaniments and the accessories is a sure indication of the necessarily great share of work that the actors themselves have to discharge to win popular appreciation and approval, and it is no small credit to their superb acting that many of these varieties do cater even today to the recreation and pleasure not merely of the rustic crowd but also of the enlightened.

RELIGIOUS VARIETY

The six varieties of *Bhagavati Patti*, *Tijattu*, *Pana*, *Patti*, *Kanivar Kali* and *Mutiyettu* have been characterised as religious for the simple reason that they are invariably found celebrated in Bhagavati shrines in honour of the goddess sometimes as an annual festival conducted by the temple itself and at other times as a votive offering by the pious villagers in the temple or in their homes. These are intended to glorify the Bhagavati cult and deal exclusively with the glorification and thus the popularisation of that cult which, by the way, is one of the theistic Hindu cults most popular in our parts. They have again for their main theme the destruction of *Darika* by *Kali* or the Victory of *Parvati* over *Siva*. The language of these songs is exclusively in the local vernacular, and the actors or the dancers are generally from the lower orders of the caste Hindus. These and the fact that the lower types of *Tantric* and *Mantric* rituals are also found associated with some Bhagavati shrines tempt one to think that in these spectacular representations may be found the sole surviving relics of the old type of the worship of sylvan Gods and Goddesses current amongst the indigenous native population which by culture-contact and culture stratification were purified, ennobled and admitted into the Aryan fold.

(i) *Bhagavati Pattu*

Bhagavati Pattu is generally found conducted either in temples or in the houses of the Kerala Brahmins called *Namputiris*. The figure of Bhagavati with heads and arms and body is drawn on the floor with coloured flour and then *Jnāprastha* is done. Sitting around it and playing upon some of the musical instruments the troupe of people called *Kurups* sing the songs glorifying the goddess. The songs continue and the story reaches the climax when the *Komaram*³ attached to the temple becomes possessed and begins his weird dance carrying a jingling *cilambu* in one arm and a pointed sword in the other. He explains in human accents the ideas of the Goddess as it were and points out how the Goddess—he uses the first person—is great and good and powerful how she is pleased with the devotion that the people have shown but how they have failed in this one or that other respect, how she is well pleased with them with the conduct of the *Pattu* and how she will always protect them. As the process of talking goes on, the songs continue and the musical instruments go on sounding. In due course the *Komaram* quiets down and the whole function comes to a close.

(ii) *Tiyyattu*

Tiyyattu is similar to the above in all respects except for this difference that when the songs reach the fifth stage the *Komaram* in his possessed fury jumps into the fire and executes some weird stepping dance. While the former type of dance can be either a family of a votive offering this latter is always a village or a communal offering. The most important point in this so far as we are now concerned is the presence of music to the accompaniment of which there is a sort of dancing by a character who poses as a representative of a divine being for the edification of a large audience in an open place.

(iii) *Pana*

Pana is another variety of similar dancing and though not much different from the preceding it is technically held to be different. Two types are prevalent it may be an individual votive offering in which case there is only one *Komaram* taking part in it—the *Komaram* associated with the temple in which the performance is conducted. It might also be a communal or a village function in which case all the *Komarams* of all the Bhagavati shrines in the neighbourhood must take part in it. Dressed in their usual weird habit they conduct in unison a very queer

³ *Komaram* also known as *Veliyapattu*, is the earthly representative of the Goddess. He is selected from amongst the *Nars* generally.

kind of dance to the accompaniment of the instrumental music of the type called *Asuravadyas*⁴. As a third sub-variety of the same, may be mentioned another similar dance in front of a Bhagavati shrine conducted by *Katupottans*, a class of people included amongst the lower orders of Nairs, who become possessed under the influence of alcoholic drink. This *Paisacika* variety, be it noted, is run as a village offering for the purpose of getting rain, when it is inordinately delayed—an evidently powerful clue as regards the Dravidian origin of these and other similar types of entertainments conducted in the name of Bhagavati.

(iv) *Pattu*

Not far removed from these in essentials, much less in spirit, is the variety, known as *Pattu*. It is purely a family or domestic function celebrated by rich families as a beneficent complement to such a ritual as marriage. The purely religious aspect of this consists in the invocation of the Goddess *Parvati* on a properly, I mean tantrically, made seat, i.e. a *Pitha* surrounded by the various items of *Mangala Carana*; this is then followed by the singing of songs by a particular set of *Ambalavasi* women, called *Puspis*, in a sing song tone accompanied by the sounding of a metal plate with a table knife. At the same time there stands in front of the goddess invoked a couple of ladies dressed in their religious ceremonial dress, and as the song proceeds they become possessed and then begin a circular dance and convey the commands of the Goddess. The function begins early in the morning and with necessary intervals runs on the whole day and night. Here again we have the glorification of the Goddess but it differs from the other kinds in that here it is a woman who becomes possessed.

(5) *Kamijar Kali*

Kamijar Kali is another variety of interesting performance current in the northern parts of Cochin, conducted in Bhagavati shrines. When the performance comes on, there is erected a decorated *pandal* in the temple adorned with flags and festoons. In the centre a big lighted lamp is placed round which the players dance to set music, both instrumental and vocal, the dance being supposed to be an imitation of the dance of *Maha Kali* and *Mahakala*. The performance generally continues for three days, the portuoo for each day being fixed with reference

⁴ Asuravadya is the name given to the instruments such as *Cerda*, *Kombu Kulal* etc and the music produced by them is loud and is everything that is the opposite of gentle.

to the music. On the first day we have the *Andikuttu*, the second day we have the *Valluvon Pattu* and on the third, the *Malama Pattu*. *Andikuttu* means acting in praise of *Andavar*, i.e., Subramanya, the issue of Siva. *Valluvon Pattu* is in praise of *Valluvon* who is held to have been a saint and philosopher, and *Malama Pattu* was so called, because probably a mountain song was sung. All these songs are highly devotional in sentiment, though here and there may be found references to social incidents. The main performance is done in the temporary hall and each day has its fixed songs. After the songs and dances are over, some farcical element is introduced in which the various castes are represented and ridiculed for their various vices. This portion of the representation is called by the name of *Porattu*, and its main theme is humour and social satire, each player appearing in costume suitable to the character. On the final day after the songs are over, all the players together worship the Goddess enshrined in the temple and make their exit. This is again a queer kind of performance in which music, vocal and instrumental, and dancing and acting play an equally important part but as in the varieties considered, here also the main and central point of interest is the Bhagavati enshrined in the temple. Naturally therefore this also deals with the glorification of the Bhagavati cult. This is, however, like the *Pana*, a group or communal celebration, where all males, children and adults, can take part, and is celebrated both as a votive offering and as a temple function.

(vi) *Mutiyettu*

Unlike the varieties hitherto described stands *Mutiyettu* which is the most important of the representations associated with the Bhagavati Cult. This is the only variety in which two characters appear in costume, the one representing *Kali* and the other *Darika*. The term itself is significant in that it means the *Yettal* (wearing) of the *Muti* (the crown) of *Kali*. A critical study of these various religious varieties tempts one to associate the origins of dramatic representation with religious music accompanied by spontaneous gestures and then music with dancing. Since the figure drawn combines in itself both pictorial and sculptorial representation herein may also be seen the beginnings of painting and sculpture. This then forms an important variety which deserves to be more closely studied.

As before this again is celebrated in Bhagavati temples and is conducted by a subsection of Ambalavasis, called Kurups who combine in themselves the arts of music and painting, acting and dancing. They arrive early in the afternoon, and in a conspicuous place in the temple front prepare a relief painting of the Goddess *Kali* in her most terrific aspect. Simultaneously with the evening rites in the temple, they begin to entertain the

people with their music, vocal and instrumental. When the evening rites and ceremonies of the temple are over, the idol of the goddess is taken out in procession and after a fixed number of circumambulations in the precincts of the temple it is kept in a prominent place. The first item in the representation is a meeting between Siva and Narada, when the latter informs him that the earth is groaning under the oppression of *Darika* and it closes with Siva's promise of his destruction by *Kali*. In the meanwhile the two characters who impersonate *Kali* and *Darika* and are dressed in costume are ready to appear and at the appointed hour *Darika* comes out and challenges *Kali*. The challenge is accepted, and *Kali* rushes in. There is no fixed stage—the whole temple area forms the stage and the characters walk about in a moving fight. Here is a long, tedious process of acting a battle between the two, and ultimately the goddess wins killing *Darika*. The last act is an imposing scene and fills the audience with terror, occurring as it does at day-break. The chief item of the murder scene is when *Kali* plunges her hands into the very bowels of *Darika* followed by the drinking of and besmeering the body with blood, and ultimately she adorns herself with his intestines.⁵

The success of the acting depends, as it necessarily must, on the superior practical skill of the actors in the matter of acting, all the more so since there is no other serious accompaniment to relieve the tedium. The representation is looked upon as a very orthodox and religious act, and so it is beyond the pale of popular criticism from the point of view of aesthetics, and one must necessarily concede that this acting is of a superior order. The costume of the characters agrees in many respects with the costume of the characters in *Kathakali*, and without committing oneself to rash statements, one may suggest that the latter may have been derived from the model of the former. Further, I incline to find in this religious representation one of the few surviving relics of the indigenous type of spectacular entertainments, and this more than anything else has tended to popularise the *Bhagavati* cult in Kerala.

(vii) Conclusion

The purely religious variety may be better termed the *Bhagavati Cult* variety, because in all these the glorification of the *Bhagavati* is the main object. It has also been mentioned that in many of these varieties, the *Komaram* plays a very important part. He is a personage connected with almost all important *Bhagavati* shrines in our parts. His other name is *Velippattu*.

⁵ There is kept within the costume a pouch containing some red liquid and a long unseemly chain-like thing to represent the intestines.

and he is looked upon as the earthly representative of the Goddess and when he is 'possessed', he is generally accorded all the honours given to the deity herself. When we remember how *Komarams* used to be selected, as they are even at the present day, we may truly see in the same, a process more or less similar to what has been described by Sheppard in his Greek Tragedy: 'Since the worshipper is regarded as affecting a God by his prayer, he assumes the character of the God to influence him and he conceives the God assuming the character of the worshipper in order to be more easily influenced'. The *Komaram* identifies himself with the Goddess and thus becomes 'in fact by enthusiasm literally filled with the Goddess'. Herein is found in short a very crude kind of Goddess impersonation on the part of the worshipper. Again, as in Greece, the performance is always out of doors, the actors, musicians and the spectators all being in open air. The performance is conducted by day in some varieties, while many of them are held during night, sometimes lit up by the moonlight but always by lamps and torches. Further, the main centre of interest is not so much the representation, as the *Bhagavati* shrine or the figure drawn of the Goddess in relief-painting in some prominent place. Furthermore, there is absolutely no effort made at any scenic effect, while the place and time are denoted by mere words or proper gestures. Thus it will be seen that *Bhagavati* cult dances, music and acting are entirely a religious function and a religious act, with the requisite religious solemnity pervading the whole performance, but with this difference, namely that the audience is bent upon enjoying it. It is also interesting to point out that the songs, the dances and rude pantomime acting—all these are hung on to a tragic story, the destruction of *Darika* by *Kali*. There are some interesting parallels with the Grecian representation during pan-Athenaic festivals. Thus there is the simple act of worship, broadening into a drama. There is also the process of the humanisation of Gods. And last, but not least, comes the mythological nature of the subject which hangs on to a tragic story and which has special reference to national cults and cult-acts. An intensive study of these from a comparative point of view is sure to yield some useful results which may throw some more light on the problem of the origin of theatrical representations.

In *Kali's* destruction of *Darika* one is tempted to find not a nature or vegetation myth. I am inclined to associate it with Hero-worship—worshipping the hero or heroine who rescued the place from the oppression of a wicked demon. When, however, it is remembered that *Kali* fights her battle with sword and shield and *Darika* with sticks, it is tempting enough to search for in this the pre-historic clash between the earlier wood age and the later iron age. But this topic does not come within the

province of the present subject, and I do not wish to pursue it further, except to suggest that a detailed, systematic study, of the same may also help to elucidate the pre-historic culture-values of the Malayalis.

SECULAR VARIETY

The importance of this variety cannot be over-estimated for its contributive value to the enrichment of Malayalam and Sanskrit Literatures. The development and popularisation of the varied types of secular entertainment have definitely contributed to the growth of Malayalam Literature and to its elevation to the status of a literary language. The more important of the types under this head are (i) *Elamutti-purappatu*, (ii) *Tullal*, (iii) *Korattiyattam*, (iv) *Mohiniyattam*, (v) *Kayyukottikkali*, (vi) *Pathakam* and (vii) *Kathakali*, which represent between them all varieties of singing, dancing, and acting with the appearance in public of characters in costume. As in the case of the purely religious type there is no fixed stage, but unlike it there is always a curtain used; again unlike it, the centre of interest is the actual representation in front and not the temple or the figure of a Goddess. In the case of one at least of these varieties, the method of announcing the performance is singularly effective. The instrumental musician, the *Cendakkaran* sounds in the evening his instrument in a peculiar manner called *Kelikkoru*. This sound is generally heard within a radius of not less than two miles. Equally effective from the practical point of view is the method of advertisement. When a troupe of players come to a village they hold a free performance, called *Seralali*, in the village temple. This serves the double function of paying homage to the village deity and acting as a sort of advertisement, it being a common measure of encouragement given by the authorities of the temple to supply free light for the performance. A more effective way of announcing a troupe of players cannot be conceived. It deserves to be pointed out even at the very outset that all these performances, including those already mentioned and hereafter to be mentioned, are free to all, i.e., there is no ticket system, and this is something in which our stage stands entirely apart from all other modern stages as far as we know. For the benefit of the village the richer people of the *gramam* one after another invite the troupe to play in their houses, the expenses being paid by the inviter. A voluntary Subscription is sometimes sought from landlords and other big men of the village at the spot in the course of the performance, and this is known as *Poli*, i.e., voluntary gift. Here, in this act, the rich villager discharges his part of the *noblesse-oblige* in the matter of intellectual recreation, as much as he does in the matter of supplying free education to the more unfortunate children of the village.

(i) *Elamutti-Purappatu*

Not the least important and perhaps the most interesting from a historical point of view is what is known as *Elamutti-Purappatu*. This is a constant source of entertainment conducted in the houses of *Ambalavasis* generally on the occasion of certain religious domestic ceremonies. This is one condition as regards the place of acting; the only other condition attached to it is that only *Ambalavasis* and *Nampugiris* are allowed to take part in the performance. The nature of the performance is as follows:—A number of people, and generally each of them is a good actor in some particular character, sit round a lighted lamp after dinner. Some sort of musical instrument is sounded and one from amongst the party sings a song which is a riddle and asks another member to answer the riddle. If the person questioned fails to answer, the questioner asks him to act the part of any character with or without proper costume. Immediately he begins to act what he has been ordered. When this is over, the procedure is repeated and the part that the player is called upon to act varies from that of a drunkard to that of the love-sick Ravana pleading to Sita, care being always taken to see that each person is called upon to play only that character which he can act almost to perfection. This is a very simple form of domestic entertainment more of the nature of a farce and must no doubt have been a very interesting source of recreation.*

The name of the variety is interesting. No woman has a place in the actual conduct of the performance, though any one of the players may well impersonate any woman character; yet the term literally means *the appearance of seven maids*, or *hags*, to be more literal. One is almost tempted to remember in this connection the *Sapta Kanyakas* associated with Saivite shrines on the East coast and the "Seven Vestal Virgins of Rome." This latter part becomes historically interesting, when it is realised that the Romans had one of their colonies at the Muziris of old i.e., the modern Cranganore. But the absence of a female actor stands in the way of tracing any connection between the two. Apparently one is forced to suggest a new interpretation of the term—to take the term as debased form of "*Elamurti*"—seven characters, probably suggesting the original number of players taking part, or the impersonations to be staged. In the light of the information now available nothing further can be said about this.

* This is more or less similar to one form of the English game of 'Forfeits'.

(ii) *Tullal*

No less interesting than *Elomutti-purappatu*, but more important from a literary point of view, is the variety called *Tullal*, one of the most popular sources of recreation amongst us. This is the result of a theatrical quarrel which has enriched our vernacular literature to a very great extent. Once while a *Cokyar* was acting a drama, the *Nambiar* was playing on the musical instrument of *Milavu* and he worked it wrongly. The *Cakyar* got angry and administered a severe reproof to him in the course of his dramatic exposition. This public censure was too much for the young *Nombiar*, and so, as soon as the performance was over, he sat devising a new mode of performance, and, working at it the whole night, produced something new in form and spirit, though it was based on a harmonious combination of *Prabandham Kuttu* and *Pothakani*, which we shall refer to later on. He also devised a new costume which was more attractive than the costume of the *Cakyar*, but at the same time more ludicrous than serious. The next day, when the *Cakyar* began his *Kuttu*, his erstwhile assistant began his new performance with the required instrumental music. This attracted the whole of the *Cokyar*'s audience. Such was the origin of *Tullal*; and it retains even to-day the popularity that it had on the first day of its staging. This gifted actor-poet was the famous Kunjan Nambiar and he has made a very substantial contribution to the Malayalam Literature.

The scenic and musical equipment required in this variety of entertainment is comparatively little. The actor dresses in a costume that is peculiar, being distinct from the *Cokyar*'s dress and the dress of the characters in *Kothakoli*. He wears a frilled skirt round his waist, with a couple of *bandha* round his arms. His face is painted and he wears a head-dress. There is, indeed, some difference in the costume for the different varieties of *Tullal*. The character is helped by a musician who leads the song and works on a *Modhnam* and another man keeps time to the song with a *symbal*. The musician sings the songs which are then repeated by the actor to the accompaniment of acting and gestures and facial expression, while the instrumental music is kept up. In other words, the actor has to sing, act, gesticulate and at the same time dance—which involves some skill on the part of the actor. In this, then, may he found a harmonious combination of *Prabandham kuttu* and *Pothakom*, while the use of the vernacular language, the absence of restrictions regarding place and persons acting, the presence of a character in costume, the accompaniment of instrumental and vocal music, these have made it more popular than *Kuttu* and more attractive than *Pothakom*.

In addition, the gifted author of this innovation had 'a

refinable insight into the rationale of metrical effect and he therefore adopted various metres to match the variety of moods and emotions so that the spontaneity of impulse is at every turn exhibited by a suitable change in the measure cadence and movement of the verse, and thus he leads the way not merely in point of originality but in point of excellence in this branch of our literature'. Consequently, as he was the first so is he the best of our *Tullal* poets.

As has already been mentioned there are three varieties of *Tullal* and they are known as *Ottar Tullal* *Parwan Tullal* and *Sitankan Tullal*. They differ more in the measure and cadence of language than in costume except in the *Sitankan* where the actor adorns himself with ornaments made out of the tender leaves of the coconut tree. As has been suggested the performances are generally in the form of ballads sung in character. The Puranic stories supply an inexhaustible theme, but for the most part 'being fused with the colour and temper of the poet's mind' they appear as new creations. There are no curtains used and whenever the actor needs some rest, he has devised an easy method of taking it - he simply turns his back upon the audience. There is of course only one actor, and he appears generally with painted face and adorned with a head-dress which has some faint attempts at ornamentation generally in the form of a serpent hood. The actor is not merely to sing under the lead given by the singer but he also acts, his whole body being set in motion while his legs beat time to the song and music he dances and his eyes and face express the sense of the songs and his arms represent the same in the code of the gesture language. Since the time of its origin, this has been a very popular type of entertainment.

(iii) *Korattiyattam*

Another equally popular kind of dance representation is *Korattiyattam* or Gipsy Dance. The origin of this is not very well known and I am inclined to think that it is an importation though it has been very well assimilated to our conditions of life. Two characters appear on the scene in the garb of ladies impersonating the wives of Siva and Visnu, accompanied by a musician who sings the songs to the accompaniment of instrumental music, while the two characters act the songs in the language of the gesture code with the requisite facial expressions and dances. These two, the consorts of Visnu and Siva, carry on an interesting dialogue regarding the respective merits and demerits of Visnu and Siva, each trying to prove that her Consort is superior to the other's. They carry on the conversation by acting and dancing and by gesture language which is made clear by the musician who sings the songs, while an assistant keeps time on his cymbal.

(ii) *Mohiniyattam*

Mohiniyattam or the Siren dance, was once a very popular source of entertainment which has now practically died but here a lady appears in the garb of a temptress and entertains the audience with dance and music. The idea is based on the legendary story of Visnu's appearing in the garb of Mohini to tempt Siva. It is a very elegant type of recreation but unfortunately because the women who thus appeared in public generally had low morals it came to have some opprobrium attached to it. It is no longer a current entertainment.

(v) *Kayyukottikal*

The only other variety where women appear in public to entertain people is in what is known as *Kayyukottikal*. Here a number of grown up ladies dance round in a circle singing the songs in chorus under their leader and keeping time with their hands. This resembles the Japi dance of the Mundas in Chota Nagpur but for the presence of the male who works the instrumental music.¹ The English educated ladies of the present day look down on this sort of entertainment and as a result this is also sharing the fate of *Mohiniyattam*. But fortunately there has been a revival in that this is now being used as one of the methods of physical education for girls. This is important also from the literary point of view in that it has tended to create some good literature in Malayalam. This type seems to be on the border line between dance and drama. It is interesting to point out here that this particular type of folk dance is very common during the local *Sivaratri* festival which is supposed to be a commemoration of the destruction of Anna Cupid, at the hands of Siva. Can this circular dance be taken as an instance of the use of dances to honour the dead as was the case at Athens?²

(ii) *Pathakam*

Pathakam is bilingual variety, semi Sanskrit semi Malayalam. In form and in nature it is closely modelled on that variety of *Kuttu* which is called *Prabandhami Kuttu* and is probably connected with it in origin also. It consists in a dramatic exposition of any incident from the Puranas, the exposition being entirely in vernacular, while the verses for recital are in Sanskrit. It entirely dispenses with any kind of stage equipment and there are no conventions to be satisfied except probably the presence

¹ This information is supplied by my esteemed colleague Dr Sen

² Vide the Drama and Dramatic dances of non-European Races—Page 10

Kam, for this has led to the creation of a number of works in Sanskrit which are locally called *Prabandhams*. In number they are over 30, and in size they may easily fill a volume of about 300 pages, while in intrinsic merit they occupy a very high place in literature. Here is a definite measure of Kerala contribution to Sanskrit Literature, but unfortunately it is as yet unknown and unjudged. It is strange that not one of these has yet been published in Devanagari script. Again the need for an expository commentary to help the *Pathakakaran* has also led to the creation of a school of literary criticism in Malabar and it also adds a definite contribution of its own to literary criticism. Thus it will be seen that *Pathakam* and *Prabandham Kuttu* supplied not merely noble recreation to all alike, both the literate and illiterate, but also enriched the Sanskrit Literature both by original works and valuable commentaries.

(vii)-*Kathakali*

Kathakali, the most important variety of our popular stage, is not a very old type of entertainment and the circumstances of its origin are well-known. One of the well-known Zamorins of Calicut organised what has now come to be known as *Krsnattam*, modelled probably on Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*—a variety of our stage which we shall consider later. This became very popular as soon as it was organized, and a neighbouring chief requested the Zamorin to send the troupe to his court. But because they were political rivals, the latter refused to send the troupe and sent word that there were none at the southern court who could appreciate the play. The chief retaliated by organising another popular variety of entertainment, then called *Ranianattam*, which subsequently has come to be called the well-known *Kathakali* or *Attakatha*. Thus was organised by a chief of *Kottarakkara Svarupani*, a new type of entertainment which before long became the most important section of our local stage and which led to the creation of what constitutes the most substantial part of our vernacular literature. Thus this is one example of a political feud resulting in literary acquisition.

It is definitely known that *Krsnattam* was first staged on the date expressed in the Kali chronogram, 'Grahya stutirgathakaih', which when worked out, gives the date, approximately 1657 A.D. This would show that *Kathakali* must have come into existence sometime later. We shall not be far from the truth if we place this in the latter half of the 17th century. The same view is further borne out by the opening verse of *Ranianattam*, which runs as follows:

Praptanandaghanassriyah priyatama stirohinijannianal-
Yanciksmavaravirakeralavibhoh rajnassvasussununna
sisyena pravarena sankarakaveh ramayanam varnyate
karunyena kathagunena kavayah kurvantu, tatkarmayoh.

of a lighted lamp to be kept in front of the actor. On account of its simplicity of staging, it is one of the most popular types of entertainment current in our parts.

As the term itself suggests, the actor or expositor must be very learned and must besides possess a witty tongue and shrewd powers of observation, these, in addition to a melodious voice constitute an ideal actor. The costume of the actor is very simple, though quaint. He wears a bead dress which has some faint attempts at ornamentation, though in the absence of this, any coloured piece of cloth round his head will quite suffice. His chest is generally bare, adorned with sandal paste, necklaces, and other ornaments. There is nothing to mark off the stage from the audience but a lighted lamp, and there is no curtain.

When everything is ready, the actor comes, stands facing the audience and performs *Mangala* the verse being mixed Sanskrit and Malayalam, in a voice that is scarcely audible. This is then followed by a long prose passage in which he sets forth the purposes of such dramatic expositions, the main object being religious education of the easiest and simplest type. This opening verse and the subsequent prose passage compare very favourably with the *Nandi* and *Prarocana* of the Sanskrit stage. These over, he begins in the local vernacular and describes the situation where the story begins. Having thus well introduced the audience to the particular context, he recites the text which is in Sanskrit and proceeds to expound the same in vernacular with a wealth of illustrations, making adequate reference to the current social topics and not rarely to individuals. There is little of acting, but appropriate gestures are utilised to make the narration as vivid as possible. The expositor enjoys freedom of speech to a certain extent, though for fear of losing his patronage he never uses it to the same extent as the *Cakkar* does. It will be seen from what has been said that the main aim of this variety of spectacular entertainment is to impart education leavened with wit and humour.

The variety of entertainment is not far distinct from the variety of *Kuttu* called *Prabandham Kuttu*, for in both we have dramatic exposition and both serve more or less the same purpose. There are indeed some essential differences to which we shall refer later, and these would show that in *Pathakam* we have *Prabandham Kuttu* in miniature. The prominence given to the local vernacular and the freedom given to the performance the place of acting and the actor are evidently innovations introduced in the direction of simplification with a view to making it more and more popular. And well was it for our land that such a type of recreation came into existence, for, as a result of this some of the heat of Sanskrit learning illuminated the minds of even the masses. From another point of view also one ought to be grateful to the originators of *Path*.

kam, for this has led to the creation of a number of works in Sanskrit which are locally called *Prabandhams*. In number they are over 30, and in size they may easily fill a volume of about 300 pages, while in intrinsic merit they occupy a very high place in literature. Here is a definite measure of Kerala contribution to Sanskrit Literature, but unfortunately it is as yet unknown and unjudged. It is strange that not one of these has yet been published in Devanagari script. Again the need for an expository commentary to help the *Pathakakaran* has also led to the creation of a school of literary criticism in Malabar and it also adds a definite contribution of its own to literary criticism. Thus it will be seen that *Pathakam* and *Prabandham Kuttu* supplied not merely noble recreation to all alike, both the literate and illiterate, but also enriched the Sanskrit Literature both by original works and valuable commentaries.

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*Prapantanaghanassriyah priyatama srirohinijannmam
Vanicksmavaravirakeralavibhoh rajnassvasussununa
sisyena pravarena sankarakaveh ramayanam varnyate
karunyaena kathagunena kavayah kurvantu, satkarmavoh*

This verse suggests that the prince of Kottarakkara who is the author of this work was a nephew of Virakerala Varma of Travancore and a disciple of Sankarakavi. There appears to exist a prince of this name somewhere about 1665 A.D. It is therefore quite probable that this new variety must have been devised somewhere in the sixth decade of the 17th century.

It may not be uninteresting to point out briefly the nature of *Ramanattam*. It describes the story of Sri Rama, beginning with Dasaratha's *Putrakameshi* sacrifice and ending with the siege of Lanka. The costume of the characters was more or less based upon what obtained in *Krsnattam* and masks were worn. The whole play was divided into seven Acts, to be staged in seven days or a Seven Days Play, as is technically called, and was first staged in front of the Ganapati shrine at Kottarakkara, the shrine of the family patron deity. Coming to the work itself, the language is a mixture of Sanskrit and Malayalam, the former predominating in the verses and the latter, in the *Padams*—a peculiar language feature which obtains also in the later *Konthakali*. Critics are of opinion that the work does not possess a high order of literary merit; but however that may be, students of Malayalam Literature cannot afford to forget the services rendered by the prince of Kottarakkara; for he originated the new type of spectacular entertainment which in its turn contributed a good deal to the literary status of Malayalam.

The legitimate and proud child of *Ramanattam* is *Kathakali*, which we shall now proceed to notice. As is usually the case, the play is generally announced by a *Kekkottu*, and since elaborate get-up and costume are necessary for the various characters, the more important actors get to the green-room early in the evening. As in the Sanskrit dramas, there is the *Puriaranga* which consists in the recital of a few verses followed by some specific *steppings* behind the curtain. After this the curtain is lifted and the hero and the heroine of the play make their appearance and perform *Mangala*. This constitutes what is called *Totayam-purappatu*, and it compares very favourably in almost all essential respects with the *Purvaraaga* and the *Nandi* of the Sanskrit Dramas. After this is over the play begins, the most prominent feature of which is, as we have mentioned, the use of the gesture language and the exquisite dancing and acting to the accompaniment of the music of the singer who also works on musical instruments. The play generally continues throughout the night, the more important characters appearing only towards the latter part of the night. The actors are generally Nairs, and rarely Brahmins, and they have to undergo a process of training for a period of not less than five years. The various poses, the supple dances and the clearness of facial expression, in these *Kathakali* actors appear to satisfy the highest expectations of Bharata. They have attained

almost perfection in the art of acting as expounded by Bharata as well as in the art of the proper use of paints, yet they are not slavish imitators. Though Bharata has tabooed many an item from actual representation on the stage, such for instance as duels, deaths, feasts, kissing, embracing, etc., our actors never care for these restrictions: they represent these freely as on the modern stage.

The plot of the story is generally taken from that inexhaustible storhouse of Hindu mythology, the venerable Epics. It is to be regretted that no local heroes are dramatised, even though there were indeed a number of them, at that time at least, who achieved the highest eminence on account of the coming of the Portuguese and the consequent series of battles, yet our authors have introduced many innovations and changes in the Puranic stories which are intended either to remove practical difficulties of staging or to enhance the artistic effect of acting and afford scope for the presence of almost all the most important characters. The 'literary framework' of the plays is composed of three distinct elements. The *Padams* or verses constitute the first of these and they are mainly Sanskrit in form and language, conforming more or less to the highly artificial nature of the classical language in the introduction of the various verbal figures such as assonance, alliteration and long compounds. But unlike those in Sanskrit dramas, these verses set the story in motion and serve as connecting links to bridge over the difficulty of time and space and in this respect they fulfil the function of the Shakespearian chorus as found in the *Henry V*.

* The verses are always sung and very seldom acted. The second is what are called *Dandakams*, long pieces of rhythmic prose in mixed Sanskrit and Malayalam which serve more or less the same purpose as the verses. The third is called *Padams*, which are mainly in Malayalam and form the subject for acting. They are neither in the classical metres nor in the musical Dravidian metres, but in rhythmic prose obeying certain specific laws, and guided by musical quantity and notation based on the length of syllables. They are at the same time conversational in style and use the 'emphasis of sound to strengthen the emphasis of sense'. The *Padams* can be divided into many kinds based upon the subject matter, such as for instance erotic pieces, challenges, self-praise, messages, laudations, etc. The first of these consists of such pieces as describe the sunset, moonrise, etc. and their effect on the impassioned hero or heroine, and these are characterised by the slow moving steps, which in local technique are known by the term *Patinnaitam*, the movement of the piece and the acting generally agreeing with the rise and development of the passion. The *Padams* are fully as capable of expressing emotion and as efficacious in imaginative appeal as the *stokes* but transcend them in musical effect. They are a splendid blending of

the various *steppings* the painting of the face and the use of *Ninam Anival* These constituted the main innovations, and all these changes together constitute what is technically called the *Kaplingat* or the *Northern Mode* of representation The *Kallatikotu* or the *Southern Mode* differs from the former in that it introduced some changes in the gesture language and the dancing steps, in the nature of music, *Sangiti*, a variety of *tunes* being introduced, etc The essential difference between the two lies in the fact that while the former emphasised expressiveness of facial features and gestures, the latter brought into greater prominence dancing and dancing steps and made them aid expression In the stage at the present day, both these modes are mingled together and as a result all the four items are adequately emphasised

We shall now briefly notice the costume and get-up of the various characters There are three types of characters that appear on the stage and they are (1) *Minukku* (2) *Teppu* and (3) *Tati* The second of these is again of two kinds (a) *Pacca* and (b) *Katti*, while the third is again of three kinds (a) *Kari* or *Karatta Tati* (b) *Vella Tati* or *Velutta Tati* and (c) *Cokanni Tati* which last, be it noted, is almost the most important character in almost all plays

The first of these, i.e., *Minukku* which literally means smoothening the face is the simplest of the kind and consists of a simple powdering of the face with yellow and red pigment mixed together, adorned here and there with a few white dots Black unguent is applied to the eyes and the lashes while the white of the eyes and the lips are reddened by the application of what is called '*Cundappuru*' The forehead is sometimes adorned with a caste mark of the type called '*Gopi*' This is generally the facial paint for the females sages or saint and holy brahmins and minor characters

Pacca is a slightly more elaborate form of facial paint. The facial front is painted in green, and it is given a white border about an inch in width running all round and touching the *Cuttinata* in the forehead, which forms the base of the head-dress. The eyes and lashes and lips are dyed as before. This facial painting is generally given to the hero or the *Nayaka* of the play and such other characters as are princes and good men

Katti is a still more elaborate form of facial paint being an improvement on *Pacca* in that there is within the bordered *Pacca* another *citti* around the nose, while the space between this and the nose is kept red, the nose being green in colour. The red streak will be over $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in thickness and runs up either side of the nose to the forehead and over the brows. In addition to this there will be placed just at the tip of the nose a round ball called *Citti puru* which is white in colour.

music and poetry and thus, though they are to a certain extent lacking in naturalness, they are superior to the prose or 'loosened speeches' of the dramas. In spite of this want of a certain naturalness, they do serve their purpose almost to perfection. These three, namely *Padamis*, *Dandakanis* and *Padanis*—constitute the literary framework of the *Kathakali*. An examination of some of the well-known plays clearly tends to show that there are separate recensions of the text, and this agrees with the tradition that there were originally two kinds of *Kathakali*, the northern and southern variety, the one being popular in Northern districts of Malabar, and the other, in the South. This difference is not kept up now.

No account of this variety of our stage can be complete without a reference to the costume and get-up of the characters. When the entertainment was first devised and staged at the Ganapati shrine at Kottarakkara, the actors appeared in a very rudimentary costume. They did not apply paints, but instead wore masks painted over with red, dark and other pigments, and they never used any head-dress. The first change introduced in costume was by a prince of the *Vettat Svarupam*: he insisted that the actors must use facial paint, wear a head-dress and cover their body with something like a coat. A few changes were also introduced in the musical accompaniments. Originally the musicians were themselves the actors, at which time the *Cenda* was not used. The introduction of this musical instrument and a singer over and above the actors constituted the innovations introduced in the matter of stage accessories. The mode of representation thus inaugurated has come to be known as the *Vettat Mode*. These are, indeed, changes important in their own way. For, the first of these is a very important one, in that the use of masks not only precluded all attempts at varied expression, but, necessarily tended to stereotype the passions portrayed and prevented the rapid manifestation of the change of passion. The second set of changes, especially the introduction of a singer, enabled the actor to concentrate on the actual acting. For some time these were the only improvements effected, but later two *Namputiris* took up this study and by them the whole show was completely reorganised into what obtains now. One of the *Namputiris* belonged to the *Kaplingat Mana* and the other, to the *Kallatikotu Mana* and both introduced some innovations of their own. The innovations made by the former are briefly the following: different costumes for different castes of characters, *Alavattam* and *Vencamara* for the most important characters, in whom divine or regal splendour has to be emphasised; the mounting of a small *ball* on the tip of the nose of the *Asura* characters and the application of *Cuttis* for enhancing the effect of facial expression, some changes, in the code of the gesture language, the nature of

the various *steppings*, the painting of the face and the use of *Ninani Amval*. These constituted the main innovations, and all these changes together constitute what is technically called the *Kaplingat* or the *Northern Mode* of representation. The *Kallotikotu* or the *Southern Mode* differs from the former in that it introduced some changes in the gesture language and the dancing steps, in the nature of music, *Sangiti*, a variety of tunes, being introduced, etc. The essential difference between the two lies in the fact that while the former emphasised expressiveness of facial features and gestures, the latter brought into greater prominence dancing and dancing steps and made them aid expression. In the stage at the present day, both these modes are mingled together and as a result all the four items are adequately emphasised.

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Katti is a still more elaborate form of facial paint, being an improvement on *Pacca*, in that there is within the bordered *Pacca* another *cuttu* around the nose, while the space between this and the nose is kept red, the nose being green in colour. The red streak will be over $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch in thickness and runs up either side of the nose to the forehead and over the brows. In addition to this there will be placed just at the tip of the nose a round ball called *Cuttu patti* which is white in colour.

This figure generally presents a fierce character and is very impressive on the stage. This is the costume prescribed for *Pratinayaka* and those having an *Asura* tinge in their blood.

Still more elaborate and fierce looking is the costume prescribed for the characters known as *Tati*. *Tati* style is of three kinds (1) *Cokanna Tati* or the red beard (2) *Velutta Tati* or the white beard, and (3) the *Kari* or *Karutta Tati* or the black beard. This differentiation is based on the colour of the beard worn by these characters which is an indispensable part of their costume. In this the *cuthi* instead of circling round the nose and spreading out into the forehead runs around the eyes and reaches the *Cuttinata* the ends of which together with the central part are adorned by *Cuttipuus*. The region of the eyes is painted with dark pigment. The other facial adornments are as before. A typical *Cokanna Tati* is the costume prescribed for proud and wicked characters who are bent upon doing evil things.

Such facial painting helps facial expression considerably the colours of the paints and projections being devised with specific reference to the various *Rasas* and *Bhasas* which predominate the various characters. *Kathakali* is eminently a play in which the stronger or wilder passions have full play. The exceeding simplicity of the female characters constitutes in itself an evident proof of the minor part they are intended to play in the actual conduct of the play. It is also significant that even the female characters, when they have to discharge sterner acts, do appear in a garb more or less worthy of their function. Similarly, when love is depicted, it is always the sensuous and impassioned or the wounded and disappointed type. Thus it is always the strong passions that find expression in *Kathakali* and the facial expression is such as will suit the strong sensuous and intensified character of the passion, and naturally with a scientific eye for colour and effect, a variegated scheme has been introduced in facial paints, which agrees perfectly with the facial expression of the *Bhasas*.

saintly disposition, sages and divine agents or allies, such as Hanuman, Nandikesvara, etc. The head-dress worn by Sri Krisna and Sri Rama are generally *Muti* adorned, however, with peacock feathers, instead of a spherical crown. At the base of the head-dress is tied what is called the *Cuttunata*, (one with white line above the eyes) which forms as it were, the base from which springs the crown or coronet and which forms the white border completing the facial tattooing described before. The ears are adorned with two ornaments *Kundalams*, a convex circular wooden disc adorned with paints and hanging down, for the lower portion, and *cevikku*, a concave elongated disc, for the upper portion of the ear. Both these are worn by *Pacca* and *Cutti*, varieties of characters. The female characters and *Tati* generally wear only *Kundala* also called *Tukku*.

The dress for the body is simple, consisting mainly of what is called the *Kotalaram*, the cover for the breast. It is a movable vest held in position by means of threads. The saintly characters generally have only garlands. Over this vest across the shoulders hang what are called *Uttarivans* one of which must be red in colour held in position by means of a *Keyuram* on the upper arm. There must be besides at least one more *Uttarivam* of white, but the actual number will depend upon the importance of the character. The forearm is generally adorned with a *Ka'akam* and above that are worn some *Valas*, or bangles. The upper arm will have besides the *Keyuram* what may be termed a shoulder blade. In the case of the female characters, there will not be this shoulder blade nor the *Uttarivam*, while the *Kotalaram* will have false breasts adorned with garlands made of glass beads, while the waist is generally adorned by an ornate waistbelt.

The skirt, worn over drawers, is made of long pieces of cloth white in colour with borders adorned with lace work. The pieces are over a foot in width and are strung closely, the whole being so arranged that while it forms a beautiful skirt, it gives absolute freedom of motion for the legs for acting and dancing. The two sides of the skirt are adorned with embroidered cloth while in front hangs down what is termed a *Munti*. A leather strap, carrying belts, is tied to both the calf muscles, while at the ankles there is an ornate bandage.

Such, in brief, is the costume that the *Kathakali* actors use. In devising it, ample consideration appears to have been bestowed to suit the costume to the accompaniments and accessories of the stage, which it must be remarked is to a great extent primitive. The heavy costume no doubt makes the actors move with slow and measured gait, but it does not preclude the possibility of quick change in pose and position, and it is quite in keeping with the stately dignity of the conception and practice of this variety of our local & vernacular enter-

tainment—something which is as well echoed in the measured cadence and movement of the highly finished and literary nature of the language. It deserves also to be pointed out that this elaborate though stereotyped, costume is quite in keeping with the Hindu ideas of symbolic representation. It may not be quite happy from the realistic point of view but as symbolising the conception of superior characters and of the free and natural play of *Rasas* and *Bhavas* it can scarcely be said to be second to any. The very sight of a character reveals as much as if not more than his action the natural springs of his character and the innate motives of his actions. If to reveal the innate quality of the character through costume can be a source of success from the point of view of artistic conception then our dramatists have indeed attained to a high degree of success in this branch of art for even the most austere critic must perforce admit that the costume of the *Kathakali* actor does reveal character.

Coming to the other accoutrements of the stage reference deserves to be made only to the musical instruments. These consist of a *Cenda* a *Cenkila* and *Elattalam*. *Cenda* the popular drum is a wooden cylinder with two ends open and covered up with leather pieces. *Cenkila* is a metal plate which is sounded in unison with the drum and these two and the *Elattalam* which is a bigger variety of cymbal are sounded to provide time to the acting and stepping which are done to the vocal music. There is also a curtain used which is held in position, when wanted by two men stationed there for the purpose. As for the stage, there is nothing except a temporary shed put up above the actors, while the audience have all to sit down in the open yard. The only source of light is the big brass lamp kept in front of the actor with wicks in all the four directions. As has already been mentioned, the play is always open to the public.

(vii) Conclusion

We have in the preceding sections referred to the more important varieties of our secular theatre. Before we conclude reference may also be made to two other varieties, *Porattu Kali* and modern dramas.

The former of these, *Porattu Kali* is a variety of our theatre which has found great popularity among the lower orders of Hindus. The general features of the stage are more or less similar to those of *Kathakali* but there is considerable difference in matters of costume and general acting. In these matters it more or less tends to the modern type of dramas. But it is also different from this in that it is characterised by a complete absence of refinements of any kind. It appears that *Porattu-*

Kali is a variety of entertainment introduced from the East Coast, and consequently it has never risen to the aesthetic, literary or dramatic position of *Kathakali*.

Coming to the field of modern drama, it has to be confessed that we have not much to our credit. The extreme popularity of *Kathakali*, *Tullal*, etc probably stood in the way of the development of the modern type of dramas. This evidently is a later growth, probably not more than a generation old and it has had two distinct stages in its development. In the first period of growth, it was modelled upon the Tamil drama with plenty of music and scenic equipment with but little of real acting. This has had a short spell of existence. The spread of English education brought with it a knowledge of the modern stage and a development of that sort of literature, known as the Novel. When once the latter became popular, scenes from well-known novels began to be staged. Besides, a number of farces, portraying current social life, have been produced evidently for the purpose of the stage. Year after year farces are being produced, but so far they have had only an ephemeral existence. It appears more or less that in the field of modern drama our development lies in the direction of prose-drama. Amongst the novels that have lent themselves to the purposes of the stage, the most important are Candu Menon's *Indu Lekha* our first and greatest social novel, C V R Pillai's *Marthanda Varmia* the great historical novel, and H H Rama Varma Appan Thampuram's *Bhutarayar*, the greatest novel of the day.

Enough has now been said to show that Kerala has as much variety in the secular department of her theatre as she has in the religious department. Of these *Kathakali* and *Tullal* are the most important both from the literary and dramatic points of view, and these are peculiarly Malayali in spirit, in conception and in practice. Both these again have their origin in a quarrel and that with semi-religious Sanskrit varieties. *Kathakali* is the off-shoot of a quarrel over *Krsnattam* and *Tullal* of a quarrel with *Cakyar* acting a *Prabandham Kuttu*. And both have alike tended to the enrichment of our vernacular literature. To the student of dramaturgy, *Kathakali* has its own particular appeal to make and interest to yield. Apart from the code of gesture language it has evolved for its own purposes, herein may be seen almost the highest perfection of the arts of acting and dancing, the perfect realisation as yet known of the technique so scientifically elaborated and described by Bharata in his *Natya Sastra*. And these two constitute our richest heritage in the field of our stage and literature*.

* The information presented here is mainly based on oral sources. Different local variations also might exist.

SEMI RELIGIOUS VARIETY

No less important is the semi religious variety of the Kerala Theatre which consists of the three important types (i) *Sanghakali* (ii) *Krsnattam* and (iii) *Kuttu*. Each one of these is important in its own way. *Sanghakkali* is an entertainment of a national character based on a religious function which might have had a political end, if our traditions may be believed and it led to the development of some comic songs and the utilisation of satire as a weapon of social and political reform. *Krsnattam* may tend to shed some light on the origin and development of Hindu dramas an aspect which is probably found developed in the *Yatras* of Bengal¹⁰, and it is very important in so far as it led to the creation of the type of entertainment called *Kathakali* and with it the richest part of our vernacular literature. *Kuttu* is indeed the most important of the series, because it has a wider significance. For in this type the orthodox traditions of Hindu dramaturgy exist in their living form. Equally important is its contribution to the elucidation of the *Bhasa Problem*¹¹. These have been grouped together and termed the semi religious variety for the reason that they have some religious atmosphere introduced into them though it must be said, there is nothing essentially religious about them.

(i) *Sanghakkali*

The origin of *Sanghakkali* cannot be definitely ascertained but it traditions may be believed it consists of groups of *Sanghas* meeting together for some national purpose religious or secular and amusing themselves by some spectacular entertainments. This type is known by a variety of names *Sanghakkali*, *Sastikali*, *Sastrakkali* and *Yatrakali*. It is called *Sanghakkali* for the reason that various *Sanghas* take part in the performance. The conduct of this *Kali* as a votive offering is supposed to bring prosperity, and so it is termed *Sastikali*. It is *Sastrakkali* because with this are traditionally associated the beginnings of *Sastric* studies in the land. It is *Yatrakali* or *procession play*¹² probably for the reason that this refers to the coming and going of some foreign elements.

¹⁰ G Thakurtha questions this generally accepted view vide the opening chapters of his *Bengalee Drama* for a full discussion of the relationship between *Yatra* and *Samskrta* Drama.

¹¹ Vide the writer's papers (i) *The Bhasa Problem* in the IHQ Vol I, pp 103 11 330 340 (ii) *The Bhasa Theory Again* — 4 *Reply to Keith* IHQ Vol III, No 3, pp 552 558

¹² *The Bengalee Drama* p 8

The reported origin of this *Kali* is as follows. The great advance that Buddhism made in the land made it necessary to devise some measures to check the rising tide of that alien religion. The orthodox *vaidiks* therefore met in solemn conclave and as advised by Jangamamaharsi, they inaugurated this performance and in addition invited from outside six great *mimamsa* scholars to combat Buddhism and to organise a school of *Sastric* studies.¹³ If any credence may be attached to this legend, then the beginnings of this variety of entertainment may well be put back to the early centuries of the Christian era.¹⁴

An examination of the various names by which the entertainment is known, of the various traditions associated with it and of its actual conduct reveals certain general features which shed light on its origin and antiquity. First of all this entertainment came into existence when Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in Kerala. Secondly, it must have originated to check the rising tide of Buddhism, particularly so if we may associate *Sanghar*¹⁵ originally with Buddhism. Thirdly it was an all Kerala performance conducted for the purpose of achieving success in some great national enterprise. Fourthly with this is associated the coming in of foreigners into the land.¹⁶ It is also clear that whatever its origin, this has been completely forgotten and it is very doubtful if the entertainment as conducted at present, has anything to do with its original purpose. It seems that in this variety is preserved the shadow of what might once have been some grand national celebration of a victory in the field of religion or of politics, probably the former because of its religious associations, for it is even to day held to be very auspicious to hold this performance. This further suggests its extreme antiquity, particularly because there is but very little of religion in it now.

The *Kali* consists of five distinct sections (i) *Keli*, (ii) *Nalupadavaiikal*, (iii) *Pana* (iv) *Angyangal*, and (v) *Hasyangal* of which the second is supposed to be the most important part of the whole function. The entertainment is generally celebrated as a complement to some domestic ceremonies in the houses of well to-do caste Hindu families. On invitation the representatives of the various *Sanghar* come, and the first item of the programme consists in their sitting round a

¹³ Vide the writer's paper, *Religion and Philosophy in Kerala* IHQ, Vol IV, No 4, pp 712-14

¹⁴ Ibid, Note 5

¹⁵ Tradition speaks of a number of *Sanghas* existing in Kerala

¹⁶ Ibid, Note 5.

big wide mouthed copper vessel, called Cembu, and singing songs keeping time by striking the vessel. This is followed by one of them becoming possessed and conducting a weird dance. The last item of the preliminary rite is to break a cocoanut, after which the man possessed becomes quieted down. This constitutes what is termed *Kelkottu*¹⁷ for this variety of entertainment. After this the party retires for their evening rites.

The next item of the programme is the *Nalupadam vaikkal*, when a few brahmins of the party walk round a lighted lamp, singing in accented tones a *Malayalam* verse¹⁸. This function over, they all retire for their dinner, singing boat-songs on their way, and in the dining hall they make a hell of noise, vociferating like hungry gluttons. After the repast they again assemble in the open hall outside and perform what is termed *Uliccal*. Then they begin their *Angyangan* which consists in sword play, which is not unworthy of Don Quixote. This is followed by *Hasangan*, in which the chief character is *Itikandappan Kaimal*,¹⁹ the impersonation of the master-idiot. In the first stage he figures as a swordsman and then as a fisherman and in both these capacities, he is made the butt of ridicule. Other characters also make their appearance, the more important being *Mannan* and *Mannatti*, the washerman and the washer-woman, still another is the gipsy who entertains the audience with her dance. This last part can be played only by the members of one family, the Namputiri family of Puntottam.

Such in brief is the order and nature of this type of entertainment. It does not require any stage or any curtain, it

¹⁷ Cf. See *Kriyacaryuttaka* in *Kuttu* described later on.

¹⁸ It is a very interesting question to raise why the actors should sing a verse in *Malayalam* on the occasion of what is treated as a very orthodox ritual. Is there an element of satire on the Buddhists' use of the vernacular as the language of their religion? This cannot be, because such an aspect is inconsistent with any religious attitude. We may probably see in this the Buddhist influence in utilising the spoken language as a medium of religion and religious experience. If this view may be accepted, then we may see in this a close relationship between the *Kali* and Buddhism.

¹⁹ This is a type of the local magnate we had in olden times and who is not very rare even in these days. Proud and haughty and conscious of his power and at the same time incapable of anything, he was in every way unworthy of the office he was called upon to fill by chance or the accident of heredity. He pretends to be brisk and clever and learned, but really he is just the opposite of what he pretends to be. He is an inimitable character drawn no doubt from actual life.

generally takes place in the open air in the quadrangle of the house under a temporary canopy. The only source of light is the orthodox tall brass lamp, *nilavilakku*, with wicks on all the four sides. The costume and songs are very primitive and the wit stereotyped. But the natural simplicity characteristic of the performance and the religious halo enveloping it account for the appeal it makes to the masses. The main interest of the whole thing lies in its antiquarian aspect and in its songs which are characterised by an archaic flavour. One impression it leaves upon us is that the performance consists of two distinct elements, one, a meeting of the leaders of the *Gramams* for a religious or political purpose followed by their armed retinue and two, a farcical enactment by their followers to serve as a pastime for the masters.

(ii) *Krsnattam*

Krsnattam is purely a Sanskrit entertainment, modelled probably upon the *Gitagovinda* acting and has the greatest halo of religious sanctity attached to it. As we have already mentioned, this type of play was originated by *Manaveda*,²⁰ Zamorin of Calicut, about the middle of the seventeenth century. The text of the play, *Krsnapadi*²¹ is written by the same prince, and it is a masterly imitation of Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*.

There are certain conditions attached to the conduct of the play. In the first place it is not all who can take part in the play the players belong to certain specific Nayar families in

²⁰ Vide writer's Introduction to the *Mukundamala*, published as No 1 of the Annamalai University Sanskrit Series, page v, also his paper on *The Krsnas of Kerala* contributed to the Mr Ganganatha Jha Commemoration Volume. This prince is reported to be a contemporary and pious follower of Vilvaman-galam Swamiyar III, the head of Natuvil Madham and a great devotee of Sri Krsna. He requested the saint to get him a vision of the divine Lord. The latter invoked the Lord and requested Him to satisfy the desire of Manaveda. This accordingly the Lord did, but the prince in the madness of the divine moment wished to embrace the Lord and rushed at Him. This was not requested of Him, a divine voice said, and the vision disappeared, but not before Manaveda was able to snatch a peacock feather from off the coronet of the Lord. This self-same feather, as traditions report, adorns the crown of Krsna which the actor impersonating Krsna wears. This is also assigned as of the many reasons for the religious importance of this play.

²¹ The text has not yet been printed in Devanagari script.

the territory of the Zamorin of Calicut. Secondly, it is purely a family type of entertainment; the play can never be enacted outside the limits of the kingdom and even there only in temples, royal courts, and the houses of aristocratic *Namputiris*. Another condition imposed upon the actors is that those who impersonate the more important characters must fast till the performance is over. The conditions laid down for its conduct, the antique nature of the costume and other accessories and acting—all these make the performance a very orthodox affair. In actual conduct it does not in any essential respect differ from its more popular offshoot, *Kathakali*. It is entirely pantomime acting and dancing where *nritam* takes the most important place, the gesture language used being almost the same as that used in *Kathakali*.

The actors are aided by music, both instrumental and vocal. There is the musician who sings and in accompaniment are sounded the musical instruments of *Maddalam*, *Elatha'am* and *Cenkila*. As in *Kuttu*, the *Mangalacarana* consists of the *Kriyacavistuka*²² and the playing on the musical instruments. The whole performance is generally finished in nine days; the play runs on for eight nights and on the ninth night is re-enacted the birth of Krisna. Further, as has already been mentioned, the performance is restricted to specific times and places; and as such cannot be acted to order. This variety of entertainment is performed as a votive offering, and the witnessing of the most important scene, *Krsnavatara*, the birth of Krisna, is supposed to give children to the childless on which occasion the pious for whose benefit the play is enacted go fasting the whole night till the performance is over. In this variety then we have an intensely religious play.

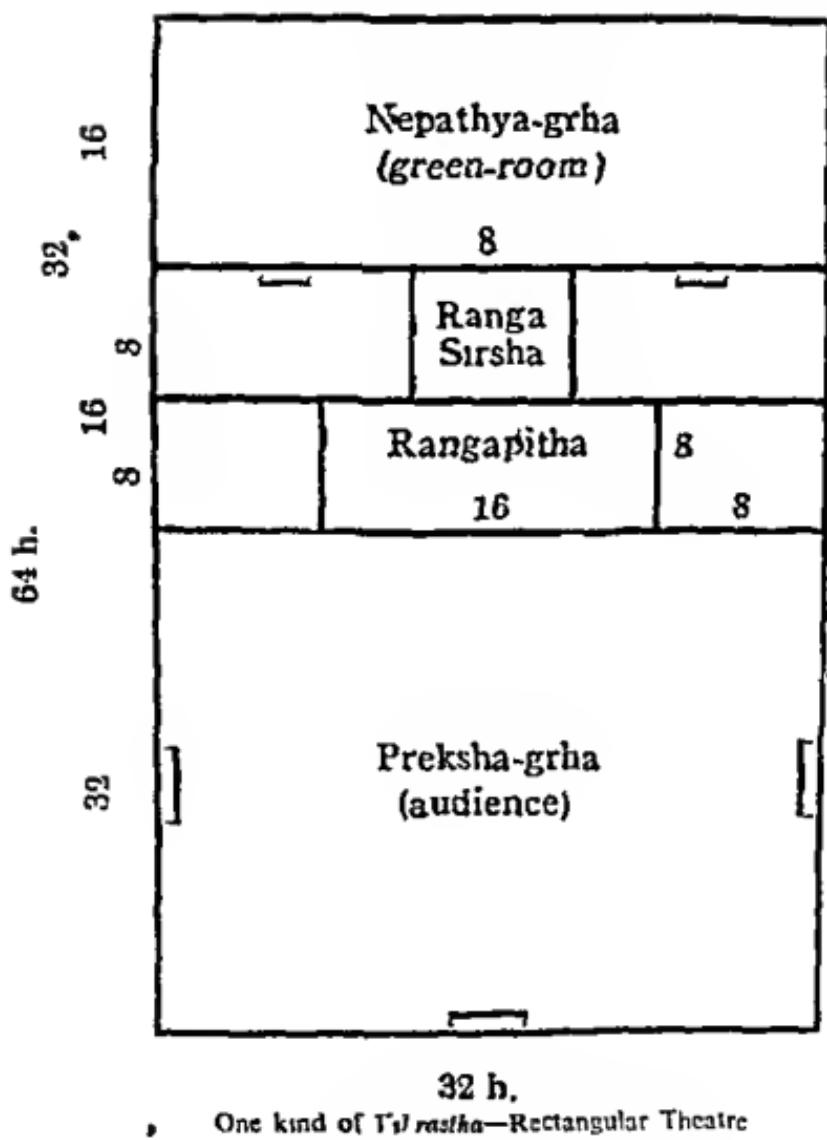
(iii) *Kuttu*²³

Kerala is probably the only place in the whole of India where Sanskrit Dramas are staged in an orthodox fashion; and the temple of the locality, where alone such staging is allowed, has been the most popular recreation-place for all high caste Hindus. The local stage has a long history behind it, going back to the days of the later Perumals, the imperial suzerains of Kerala. If tradition is to be believed, it reached the name of perfection

²² See under *Kt.* ".

²³ The matter presented in the following section has, to some extent, found publication in the various articles the writer contributed to the Journal of the Mythic Society, Bangalore; the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Branch, Bombay; the Indian Historical Quarterly, Calcutta; and the Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies, London.

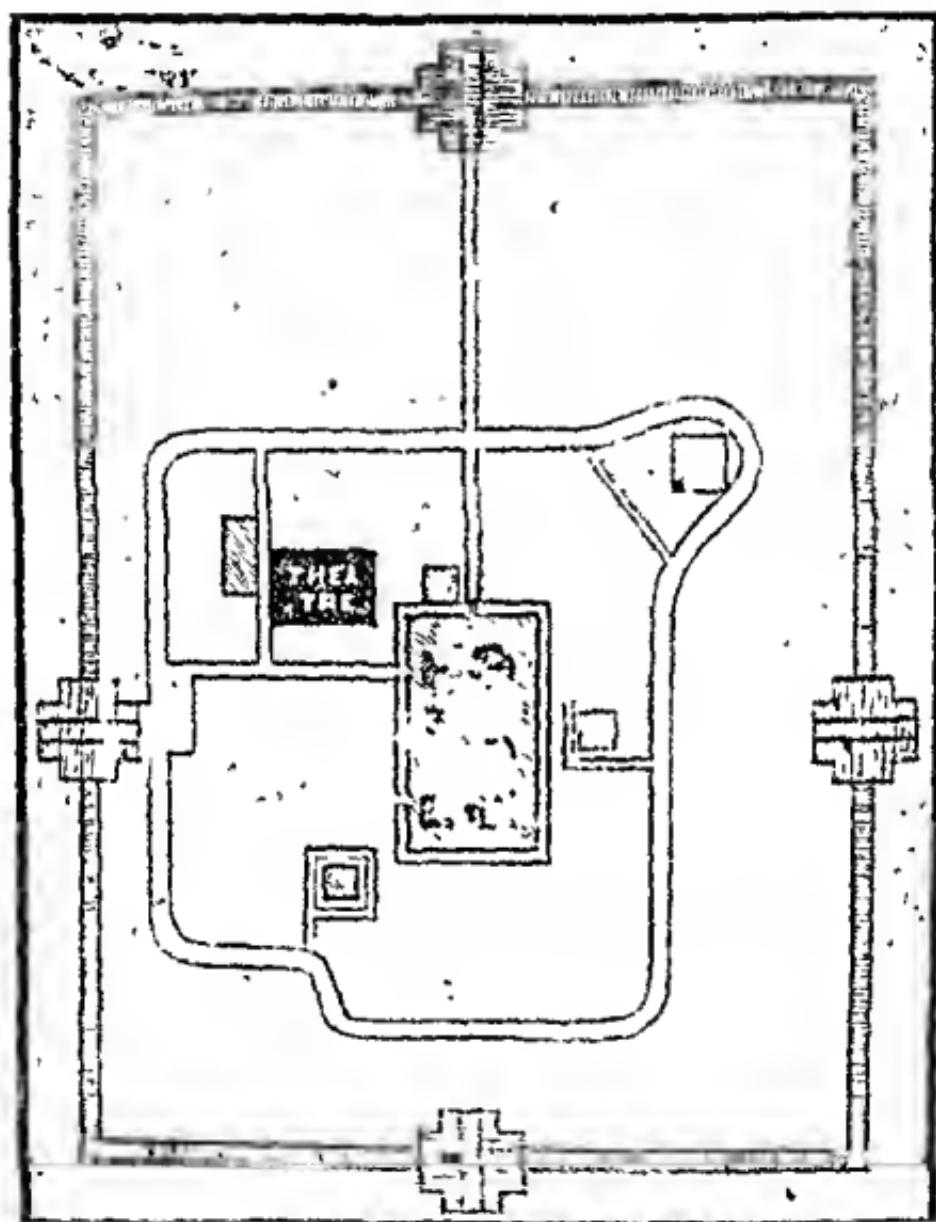
THEATRE ARCHITECTURE PLATE I



32 h.
One kind of *Tirastha*—Rectangular Theatre

PLATE II

THEATRE ARCHITECTURE



A Second Type of Theatre

during the days of Kulasekhara Perumal,²¹ who was not only a great poet and dramatist but a past master in the art of histrionics. Aided by Tolan, his minister and favourite, many innovations were introduced in the stage practice to make the acting more realistic and the stage more popular. This tradition is more or less confirmed by the opening words of the *Vyanava vyakhya*²² wherein the imperial dramatist commanded his author to sit in judgment on the stage merit of his drama which the king himself acted. When it is remembered that there is no other tradition of a stage reformation it may readily be conceded that the Sanskrit stage in Kerala may justly be proud of its antiquity. The numerous restrictions imposed upon the actors and their acting and the various peculiarities in their get up and their mode of representation make *Kuttu* an interesting subject of study to the student of antiquities. And this study deserves to be made as early as possible, for this type of play is dying out. Apart from the local importance of *Kuttu*, as being one of the most ancient and popular of our entertainments, it has got a wider Indian importance, for in this we have the Sanskrit dramas staged. It is distinct from the staging of the same elsewhere if such a thing exists at all, in our having made the *Vidusaka* give by word of mouth a translation of the verses which the hero acts and in our dispensing with the curtain which is found mentioned in the extant dramas.

It is again distinct from the other local varieties in that two conditions have to be satisfied before it can be acted. The first of these is as regards the place of acting. Like the other local varieties of entertainment, or the dramas elsewhere, *Kuttu* cannot be staged anywhere and everywhere. It must be acted only in *Devalayams*, i.e. temples. In some of the richly endowed temples in Kerala there is set apart a beautiful structure, adorned with all the skill of the architect and the sculptor, for the purposes of acting, and this is known as *Kuttambalam*—Theatre temple which is described in the concluding section of the paper. In temples where such a separate structure does not exist, the acting is generally conducted in the spacious dining hall. In every case, the theatre is in front of the temple to the right and the stage faces the idol and the actors act in front of the idol, and *Kuttu* scrupulously satisfies the injunction that it must be represented only in *Deva Sadas*, not even

²¹ Vide the writer's paper, *The Kulasekhara of Kerala* published as an appendix to his edition of the *Mukundamala* (AUSS No 1), where the date of the author is discussed, see also his paper *The Bhasa Theory Again—A Reply to Prof Keith IHO*, Vol III, No 3, pp 555-57.

²² Vide Introduction to the *Tapatisamavatana*, published in the Trivandrum Sanskrit Series

in *Brahma Sadas*. As a matter of fact it is never found acted in any place other than a temple and therefore only caste Hindus are allowed in. It is quite in keeping with this that every major temple in Kerala has endowed a particular Cakyar family in return for which they are to stage Sanskrit Dramas annually or during temple festivals.

The second condition relates to the actors themselves. Whereas all caste Hindus are allowed to take part in the other entertainments only a particular section of *Ambalansas* is allowed to act *Kuttu*. They are Cakyars their women the Nangyars and the Nampiyars. The Nampiyars main concern in *Kuttu* is to work the *Milavu*—a close necked metallic jar with its mouth tied up with a piece of leather to help the acting of the Cakyar. The Nangyar besides being an actress has also to help the Cakvar by sounding the cymbal generally and in some cases by reciting in musical tones the Sanskrit verses which the latter acts.

The Cakyars the most important of those allowed to appear on the temple stage are it is said the descendants of *Sutas* who graced every ancient Hindu court as the court bard or the minstrel. The term itself is taken as suggestive of it inasmuch as it is interpreted to be a corrupt form of *Slayar* a man of respectability a respect due to his wisdom and learning. Tradition hath it that a particular *suta* with his family came over to Kerala with one of the Perumals as his courtier. When his family was about to become extinct it was allowed to adopt into it the children of Brahmin women born of criminal intimacy. This procedure continues even to day. Such children if invested with the sacred thread become Cakyars if not Nampiyars. The girls are taken into either section indifferently. Such is their traditional origin and this shows that these actors have behind

In the early stages, this acting must have been modelled upon the old Suta's narrations, amplified probably with exposition and illustration, a form that is still living in *Prabandham Kuttu*, one of the three varieties of *Kuttu*. The next step must have been regular dramas. In those days the works of Harsa, and possibly of Kalidasa may have held the stage, for we find that the *Nagananda* has been a favourite piece with the Cakyars. The next noticeable stage is when we come to the days of Tolan towards the close of the 8th century A.D. Religion and the institutions intended to further it had by this time taken root among the people and these no longer needed the active service of *Kuttu*. In the meanwhile social and political institutions had grown up and become more or less rigid. Abuses crept in and the wise and far-seeing minister utilised this as a powerful weapon of social reform. The Cakyars enjoyed absolute freedom of speech on the stage. Availing himself of this, Tolan introduced certain very effective changes. Personal references, pointed allusions, and innuendos were the weapons put into the hands of the Cakyars and these they used unsparingly, whether the victims were princes or nobles, patricians or plebians, when the good of the society necessitated an exposure of their conduct. Of course, the serious characters are never the mouth piece of this satire, but only the inevitable *Vidusaka*. From the days of Tolan down to the present time, *Kuttu* has been serving not merely as a pleasant recreation but as an effective social tonic.

Kuttu as suggested before, has three modes of entertainment, (i) *Prabandham Kuttu* (ii) *Nanavar Kuttu* and (iii) *Kutiyattam*. Of these, the first is pure narration with exposition, the second is pure acting while only the last variety is a full fledged theatrical representation. In the first and the last of these, all the three, Cakyar, Nangyar and Nampiyar, have to be on the stage, while in the second variety the Cakyar's presence is not needed. As for the time of acting the first is acted in the afternoon, the second just after nightfall and the last one *Kutiyattam* is generally acted only during night except when the *Mahanataka* is acted.

a Prabandham Kuttu

In this the Nampiyar plays on the *Milavu* and the Nangyar sounds the cymbal in tune with the Cakyar's acting. The Cakyar recites a verse from a *Prabandham* generally that which deals with the story of Sri Rama, then he acts it, and afterwards he proceeds to expound it. The greatness of the actor in this case is to be measured not so much by his histrionic talents as by his power of exposition which is often illuminated by apt and suitable analogies from current social, religious and political events of a praiseworthy or reprehensible character. It

is here, as also in *Kutiyattam* that *Kuttu* discharges the function of a cathartic. The Cakyar here must be a sound scholar. The old generation of Cakyars were great scholars, and, no wonder, even at the present day, their explanations, their interpretations and their appreciations hold good. Thanks to the work done by them, Kerala has always been a strong centre of literary studies.

b *Nangyar Kuttu*

In this variety of *Kuttu*, the *Nangyar* takes the place of Cakyar. The most interesting point in connection with this is that a woman appears on the stage. Here we have only pure acting and naturally this affords no scope for satire. The actress is helped by the instrumental music of the *Milavu* and the cymbal. Dressed in a queer way, she first recites a verse and afterwards acts in pantomime.

c *Kutiyattam*

The most important variety in the *Kuttu* family is *Kutiyattam* where we have Sanskrit dramas staged. The term itself is quite significant. It is composed of two words, *Kuti*, meaning combined and *ottam*, meaning acting and yield the idea, combined acting. It is mixed or combined either because both the Cakyar and the *Nangyar* appear on the stage to act, or because more characters than one appear on the stage, or because there is a mixture of narration and acting, or again, as we are inclined to think, because of all these facts.

The first preliminary in *Kutiyattam* is what is known as *Kuttupuroppotu*, i.e., the starting of *Kuttu*. The stage is well adorned with green leaves, flowers, cocoanuts and plantains. A big lighted lamp, and a *Norapara*, a measure full of paddy are kept facing the actor. When the preliminaries are arranged and the actor is ready to appear on the stage, the instrumental music is sounded. On this occasion the usual music of *Milavu* and cymbal is supplemented by *Madhalom*, *Kombu*, and *Kulal*. After sounding the *Milavu* the Nampiyar retires into the green-room and, bringing some holy water, sprinkles it upon the stage, reciting the *Nandi-Sloka*, i.e. the benedictory verse of the drama more correctly of the act that is to be staged. This is known as *Aranga Tahikkuka* (sprinkling the stage with water) and with this are over all the items of *Nandi*.²⁷ Then the

²⁷ Vide writer's *Note on the Nandi*, BSOS, Vol VI, No 3 pp 819-21. The reading given in the commentary, the extract of which was published there is perfectly legitimate and relevant, when *Nandi* is understood as described here. It is not a mere recitation of a verse—it is doubtful if such a recitation forms part of it—but a very elaborate ceremony done for the most

musical instruments are once again sounded, and after* this enters the *Sutradhara* or the stage-manager, of the play.

The *Sutradhara* enters the stage and treats us to a queer kind of stepping, accompanied by dancing, which is known as *Kriyacārttuka* stepping out the action. After this he recites to the accompaniment of music, some verses, dancing in a peculiar way all the while. This is followed by the *Sthapana* of the play, or as we would put it, of the act. Even though the text of the drama may have a *Nati* taking part in it, she never makes her appearance on the stage. The *Sutradhara* does her part also.^{**} This takes us to the end of the first day's acting.

part within the green room, at the close of which the *Sutradhara* comes upon the stage and recites the opening verse. It may be pointed out here that every act that the Cakyar stages has an introductory verse attached to it, which is to be recited at the close of the *Nandi* ceremony, and this verse forms an announcement of the act that is to be staged. This would mean that the so-called *Nandi* verses, in such of the dramas of the Kerala-nataka-cakra which come under the now well-known but wrong category of *Bhasa natakacakra* are but introductory verses to the first act and not the *Nandi* verses of the whole drama. Cf. Writer's note on the subject in his translation of the *Dutaghatat-kā* published in the *Shāstra* of Madras. This is a very important point particularly for Bhasites to ponder over.

* Here again is another interesting point for Bhasites to ponder over. The curtailment of the character of the *Nati* is made no doubt as a measure of economy. And this could easily be done, for it does not materially affect the play. When, however, this is done, the conversational character of the scene ceases; it becomes a mere monologue by the *Sutradhara*. Again when the *Sthapana* or *Prastavana* is thus curtailed as a result of economising it is but natural to expect the dropping out of such elements in it as have no immediate bearing upon the scene they are going to represent. Thus, the reference to the author, the history of the composition of the play and the occasion of its staging—these details could conveniently be omitted. Thirdly, since Cakyars act only chosen acts at a time, they have to give an introduction on more or less the same lines for everyone of the acts they stage. Hence, we find a stereotyped variety of *Sthapana*. Such a *Sthapana* therefore does not point to Bhasa's authorship of the particular act, but it simply means that it was an act popular on the Kerala stage. It may be pointed out that its main function, as it is now presented, is to announce the main incident of the act or mention the main character that appears on the stage. This then is the result of a living dramatic technique. Thus, as before, here also the nature

On the second day the scene opens with the character that the *Sutradhara* has mentioned the previous day. This will generally be the hero of the play. But even now the play proper is not begun for this actor acts only what forms the introduction to the particular act of the play which is to be staged. This is known as *Nirvacana* and this takes us to the end of the second day.

Here it may be pointed out that on no occasion is a drama staged to full, but only particular acts. The chief reason for this is probably the long period of time it may have to run and the practical difficulties of staging. A full description as to how the Cakyar must act the various dramas is given in the books *Kramadipika* and *Atta Prakarana* books which form the actor's manual and guide. Each Cakyar family has got copies of these books, but keeps them so jealously that they are not easily available.

The *Nirvacana* being over on the second day the main story begins on the third day in the case of those dramas which have no *Vidusaka*. In case however, there is a *Vidusaka* the main story has yet to wait for three or four days. For on the third day the *Vidusaka* comes on the stage and lords it over for the next three days at the least by the exposition of what are known as *Purusarthas*, or the aims of life. These are according to him, four in number. (i) *Vinoda* i.e., the enjoyment of the pleasures of life, (ii) *Vancana* or deception (iii) *Asana* i.e., feasting, and (iv) *Rajaseva* i.e., service under kings. The exposition and acting of these take four days, but are generally done in three days by rolling up the first and the second varieties together. These four items teem with wit and humour. It is here that the offensive social customs and manners, the oppressive conduct and behaviour of those in power are exposed and held up to censure and ridicule. It is here in short that *Kuthu* appears as a powerful weapon of civic and social reform.

For the realisation of these *Purusarthas* the people of the village of *Anadhuta Manjala* i.e., the Village of Illiteracy assemble together under the leadership of the village priest whose qualification for this post by the way is that neither he nor his father nor his father's father ever studied any *Mantra* or *Tantra*. Of those assembled the most important are the *Unni Namputiris* the various types of *Ambalavas*, and the Nayar element comprising the local magnates and the temple musicians. Here we have the unit of a Kerala Hindu village.

There is, it must be remembered, only one actor on the stage and he has to act the assembling of this crowd, their deliberating as to what should be done to realise the aims of life, their bickerings and finally their coming to a decision. The Cakyar here figures as a perfect mimic. In impersonating this typical assemblage one by one, the actor takes the opportunity to ridicule their social and moral vices. In this case it goes without saying that the success of acting depends entirely on the actor's power of mimicry.

Vinoda is acted on the third day of *Kutiyattam*. The people of the *Village of Illiteracy* having assembled, they set about devising means as to how best they can satisfy their animal passion. This occasion is utilised to indulge in a lot of abuse on the immorality current in the society. The names of so many ladies are suggested one after another, but each one is given up for the reason that she has some failing or other. Here, then, we have a process of elimination wherein are displayed all the failings that man and woman are together liable to. It need scarcely be said that it's unsparing annual satire has been exerting a very salutary influence in keeping up the tone of social morality. The next item, *Vencuna* is generally mixed up with *Vinoda*. The *Viddi*, fool, one amongst the villagers, is made the thief, and the occasion is utilized for much moralizing of a very valuable nature.

On the fourth day we have the third of the *Purusarthas* described and acted. Here no sort of curtailing is ever made or allowed to be made. The feast is described and the feasting is acted most realistically, the *Vidusaka* playing the role of an ideal glutton. Here we have mimicry in the purest and the most realistic form teeming with illustrations, brimful of humour, so much so that even a chronic dyspeptic will evince the keenest relish for a feast, if only he were to see this acting.

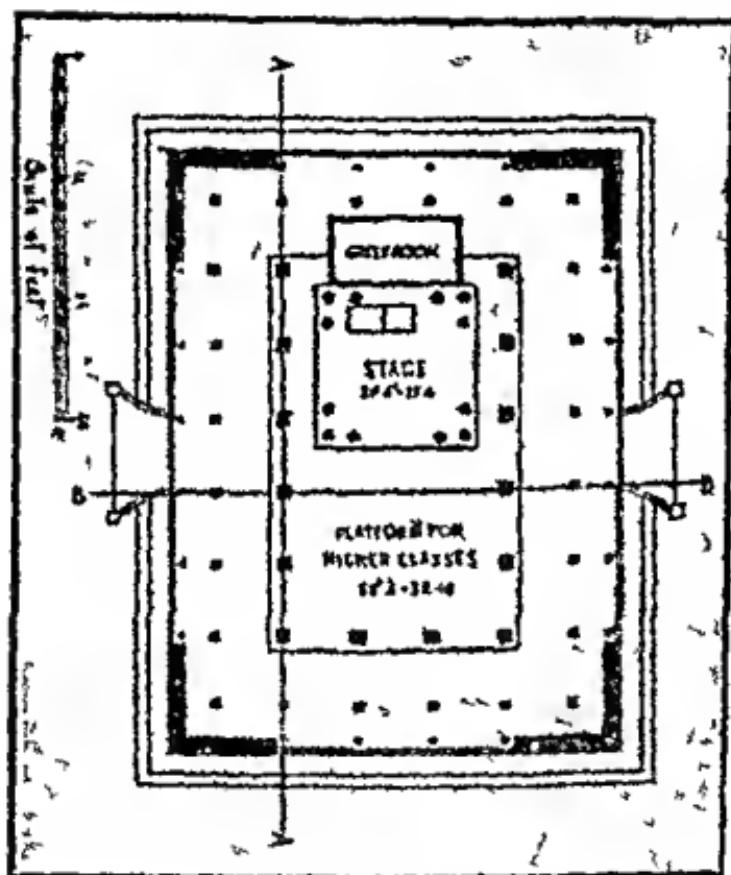
On the fifth day we have *Rajaseva* the last of the *Purusarthas* acted, when the ruling chief and his magnates come up for their share. The assembled villagers discuss among themselves as to who is the best king under whom they could take service. One suggests the chief of this place, another of that place. The various suggestions are overruled in favour of a particular chief. In this process of elimination the whole machinery of government has its weakness revealed. The Cakyar ventilates the grievances of the ruled. He describes in pitiful terms the hard lot of the people in general and of the subordinate officers. The numerous sufferings, physical and mental, which these have to endure consequent upon the carelessness, inconsiderateness and indifference of the masters are portrayed in but too vivid colours. Even the crowned and anointed chief is not exempt from the criticism of the Cakyar, and this is true even at the present day. His acts which are oppressive or obnoxious or un-

popular are mercilessly exposed. His policy, when it is not conducive to the well being of the people, is criticised downright. In short, the Cakyar brings home to the ruler how the people view him and his acts. And note this is done often and for the most part in the very presence of royalty, a presence which only makes the Cakyar more unsparingly eloquent. Such open unsparing criticism was, it need scarcely be said, very valuable in those pre-newspaper days in that it tended to improve both the ruler and the ruled. In this feature *Kuttu* fulfils the functions which the Miracle plays of medieval Europe were performing. The three P's, the butt of the actors, in our case mean evidently men in authority, religious and secular.

After this long process of elimination, the leader comes to the conclusion that there is only one king on the face of the globe who is worthy of being served and that is none other than the hero of the drama they intend to stage, and the motley crowd of villagers start away to take service under him. Thus is this long introduction, perhaps not strictly dramatic as some may be inclined to think, but none the less entertaining and instructive, connected with the drama to be staged.

On the sixth day of the *Kutiyattam*, the Cakyars act the chosen scene of the chosen drama. All the characters appear on the stage, the male part being taken by Cakyars, and the female part by Nangyars. Even on this occasion the characters, except *Vidusaka* never speak, but only use the gesture language which is greatly helped by the expressiveness of the eyes and the face. The actors come dressed in character, dressed indeed in a queer way. The mode of dressing is different in the case of the characters of different dramas. Thus for instance the characters of *Jimutavahana*, the hero of the *Narananda* and *Arjuna*, the main character in the *Dhananjaya* and *Sri Rama* of the *Ramanatakus* appear in different costumes. The inevitable *Vidusaka* appears in his weird dress. The main function of this character is to recite for the benefit of the masses a vernacular translation of every verse that the hero acts. The part played by him in this respect is very significant inasmuch as this marks a deviation in our mode of representing a Sanskrit drama, the more so because no provision is made for such a process in the dramas themselves. Here then, we have an innovation introduced by a discerning critic to make the drama more popular. Tradition assigns this honour also to Tolan. This was also important in that in this we may see the first beginnings of *Manpravalam* which arose from the need for a hybrid language for the use of the *Vidusaka* a language worthy of the character. This language is characterised by the preponderance of Sanskrit. Thus was begun for the use of the Sanskrit stage a type of language which in due course came to be looked upon as the form of cultured Malayalam style.

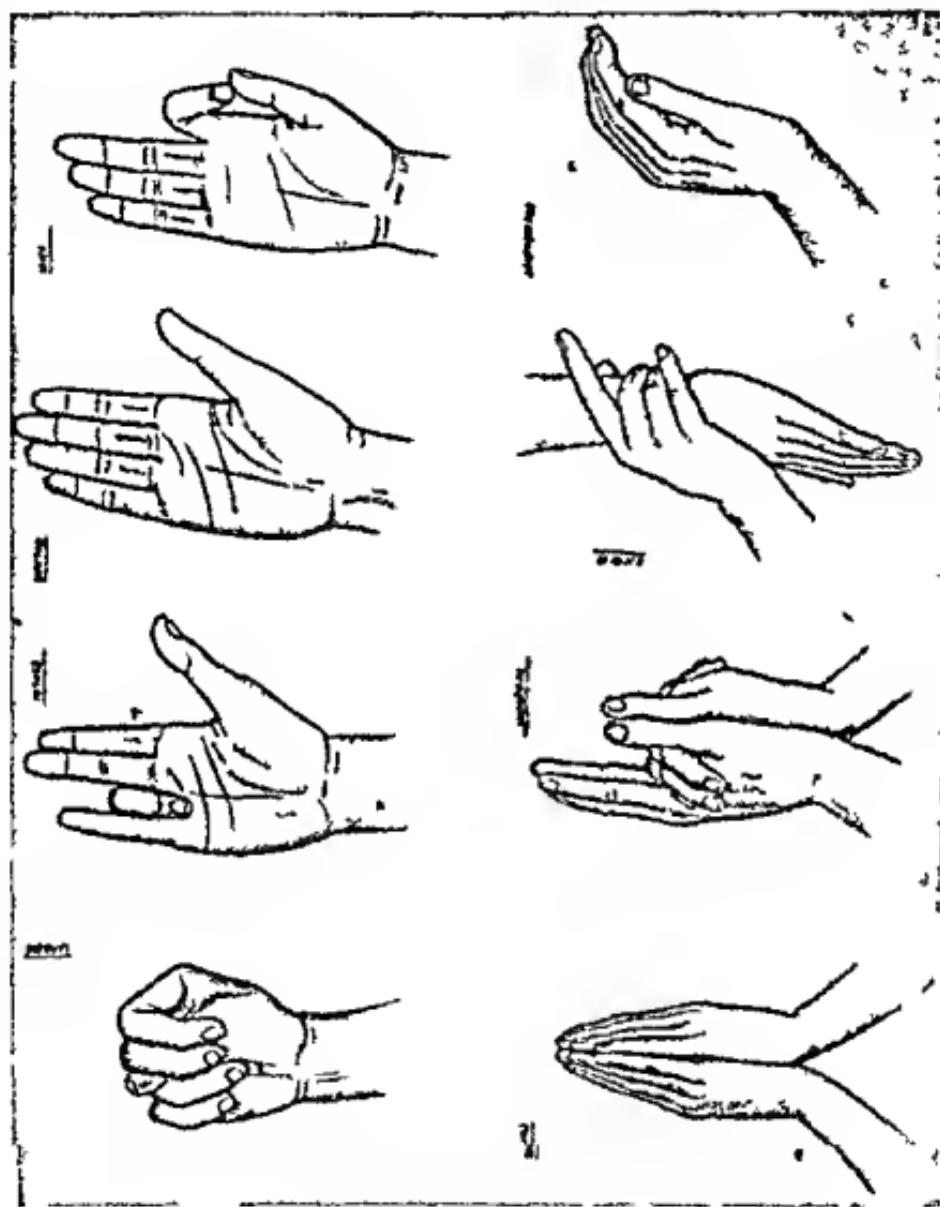
THEATRE ARCHITECTURE PLATE III



A Third Type of Theatre

PLATE IV

NRTTA HASTAS



Some Typical Mudras

(Through the courtesy of the Superintendent of Archaeology Trichandran)

According to the tradition of the Cakyars the number of Acts in which they can train themselves, or are trained, is seventy-two, including the one-act dramas and *Prahasanas*. Many of these are identified and they are the following:

1. *Subhadra-Dhananjaya*;
2. *Tapati-samvarana*;
3. *Nagananda*;
4. *Mahanataka*;

The different acts of these four dramas, Nos 1-4, have no special names, so far as we know:

5. *Mattavilasa*;
6. *Kalyana-suugandhika*;
7. *Madhymama-vyayoga*;
8. *Bhagavad-ajjuka*;
9. *Sri-Krsna-duta* or *Dutavakya*,²⁹
10. *Duta-ghatotkaca*,³⁰
11. *Karña-bhara* or *Karnakavaca*,³¹
12. *Urubhanga*,³²

Nos. 5—12 have only one act each, named as above.

13. *Pancaratra*.

The names of two of the acts are available. They are: *Vettanka* and *Bhlsma-dutanka*.

14. *Avimaraka*,³³

The names of the first five acts have been obtained. They are (a) *Annotanka*, (b) *Dutanka*, (c) *Abhisiyanka*, (d) *Parvanka* and (e) *Matamettanka*.

15. *Ascarya-cudamani*.

The following are the names of the acts, (a) *Parnasalaka*, (b) *Surpanakanka*, (c) *Maya-(Sita)nika*, (d) *Jatayuvadanka*, (e) *Asokayanikanka*, and (f) *Anguliyanka*.

16. *Abhiseka-nataka*:

The names of three acts only are available and they are: (a) *Balivadha*, (b) *Toranavudha*, and (c) *Majasiravanka*.

17. *Pratima-nataka*,³⁴

The various names of the acts are: (a) *Vicchingabhisekanka*, (b) *Vilapanka*, (c) *Pratunanka*, (d) *Atavayamanka*, (e) *Ravananka*, (f) *Bharatanka*, and (g) *Abhisekanika*.

18. *Pratijna-vaugandharayana*:

²⁹⁻³¹. The writer has published critical translations with notes of these dramas: ²⁹—in the *People's Friend*, Trivandrum. ³⁰—the *Shama'a*, Madras; ³¹—and ³²—the *Maharaja's College Magazine*, Ernakulam. ³³—the *Shama'a*, Madras; ³⁴—*The Journal of the Mythic Society*, Bangalore.

The acts are named as follows (a) *Mantranka* (b) *Mahasenanka* and (c) *Arattanka*

19 *Sapna vasavadatta*²⁵

The six acts are respectively known as (a) *Brahma carjanka* (b) *Pantattanka* (c) *Puttutanka* (d) *Sephalikanka* (e) *Svapnanka* and (f) *Citraphalakanka*

20 *Balacarita*

One act of this is termed *MaHanka* the names of other acts are not available

21 *Carudatta*

According to a Cakyar one of the acts of this drama is known as *Vasantasenanka*

22 *Sri krsna-carita*

23 *Urnada vasavadatta*

24 *Sakuntala*

These twenty four dramas are connected with our stage. They may be broadly classed under three heads (a) those that are popular even to day (b) those that were once popular, and (c) those that are only traditionally reported to be popular. Under the first head may be included the first eight. Under the head (c) come the last three dramas mentioned above and of these two are yet unknown while the last was put on boards only once. Under the head (b) may be put down all the rest of the dramas in the above list.

The two dramas, *Dhananjaya* and *Tapati san arana* are the productions of Kulasekhara one of the Perumals of Kerala who appears to have lived in the middle of the 8th century A D. They were written for the Kerala stage by a Kerala Prince. They have also a commentary written by the author's courtiers from the actor's point of view. These commentaries are therefore very important documents for the students of the Kerala stage though Dr M M T G Sastri of Trivandrum did not think fit to publish them.

The *Nagananda* has been and is still a very popular drama on our stage a popularity which may to a great extent be explained by the fact that Kerala was the last stronghold of Buddhism and Jainism in India. This drama has taxed the actors' and the stage managers' ingenuity to the last limit. Tradition says that even the fourth act used to be realistically staged the actor impersonating *Garuda* actually flying through air! The last successful flight was made at Irinjalikuda when the actor actually rose out of the temple stage and flew through air and safely perched himself on the top of a hill about one

²⁵ The Journal of the Mythic Society Bangalore

and a half mile to the north of the temple. The hill is even now known as *Kuttu-parampu*. About two centuries ago an attempt at flight was made under the patronage of the then Maharaja of Cochin at his headquarters at Kurikad a village four miles away from Tripunithura. But it ended unsuccessfully, for the actor who manipulated the cords—I don't know the exact significance of the word—failed in his work and consequently the actor came to grief. Since then the attempt has not been repeated. It will form a valuable addition to our knowledge, if complete directions regarding the flying can be got. The second act of the drama, containing the suicide scene, is being acted even now. A fairly long piece of cloth is twisted round with a noose made at one end and the other end is fixed to the ceiling. The character inserts her neck in the noose—women alone are allowed to impersonate this character—and rushes down in a giddy whirl about five feet. From this point of view this is no doubt an achievement.

The *Ma'm-natakam* is traditionally looked upon not as an original Nataka but as one compiled from various dramas. The one peculiarity connected with it is that it is the only drama that is acted during day-time.

The *Bhugavatadajjuka* is a little *Prahasanam* which has once been very popular on our stage. It has an elaborate commentary detailing how to stage it. The text proper does not contain the name of the author, but the colophon in one of the manuscripts in the Paliyam MSS Library assigns it to Bodhayana. This and the *Mattavilasa* constitute the two farces popular on our stage.

The *Knlvana-snugandhika* is a popular drama with this drama is connected the famous *ajagararitam*. It affords excellent scope for acting and is the work probably of a Cakyar.

Amongst the five one-act dramas, the most popular is the *Dusarakam* or *Srikrishnanta* as it is called. The other dramas of the series also must have been staged because extracts from them are found in a manuscript which contains all the scenes to be acted in a particular temple in Travancore. The *Pancaratra* and the *Avimaraka* might have been popular stage plays but now they are not commonly staged even though they afford ample scope for Cakyars to act.

The *Ascaryacudamam*, the *Abhiseka nataka* and the *Pratima nataka*—these three constitute the twenty-one acts depicting the life of Sri Rama. They have been always very popular, though at the present time they act only a few select scenes. These three dramas are known among Cakyars as *Cervai abhiseka*, *Valiya-abhiseka* and *Padukabhiseka*. Of the next three dramas at least one act of one of them, the *Mallunka* of the *Balacurita* has been popular. Regarding the *Carulutta* no information is yet available as regards its even having been popular on our

stage. The *Srikrasnacarita* remains yet to be discovered, if it may not be identified with the *Balacarita*.

The *Umada vasavadatta* which is a work of Saktibhadra the author of the *Cudamani*, might have been a popular stage play, but it is yet to be discovered. The *Sakuntala* tradition says, was once put on the stage, but when the Cakyar acted the opening scene, he spoiled his eyes when he looked at two objects in opposite directions, as the scene required. After this experience, it has not been staged.

Enough now has been said to show that many dramas have been popular on our stage, the total number of acts prepared for the stage being seventy-two according to the oral testimony of a Cakyar. If this be true, some dramas yet remain to be discovered.

Taking *Kuttu* as a whole, we have here in a limited way dance and music, narration and exposition, imitation, representation and pantomime acting. There is enough difference in the mode of acting the different varieties of this family and the sympathetic audience has enough food for enjoyment, both intellectual and aesthetic. Not only that, it has done much for educating our society and for raising the standard of our literary culture. No doubt *Kuttu* is steadily declining in popularity, and a detailed study of the same deserves to be made because of its intrinsic worth and because of its dramatic and historical importance. And even now it is not too late. The so-called modern refinements of the stage have not begun to exert their influence on *Kuttu*. It still continues in its antique mode of representation. The mode of dressing the mode of acting and the mode of staging—in short the stage technique—has remained the same, probably since the days of Tolan, i.e., probably a little over a millennium.

Reference has been made in the preceding section to *Kuttom balam*—Theatre temples, where *Kuttu* is staged—and we shall not better conclude than dealing with these interesting structures. In the Cochin State two such structures exist, one at Irinjalakuda and the other at Trichur. They are by no means ancient structures. In structural details and in appearance they are alike.

The theatre temple at Trichur is situate to the north west of the sanctum sanctorum and lies east and west with two main entrances, one north and the other south. The, basement stands about four feet above the level of the ground and is worked in granite with all the detail-ornamentation of the *adhishthana* in the orthodox fashion. The superstructure is made of wooden rails. Entering the theatre from the south one finds a raised platform in the centre of the structure running east and west divided into three distinct parts, the central portion being higher than the one on the east or west. The western-most part

constitutes the green-room which is marked off from the rest by screen walls. It has two divisions, one reserved for males and the other for females. The eastern part is the auditorium where the Brahmin aristocracy seats itself. The central portion which is slightly higher than the auditorium forms the stage proper. It is a square area with an ornate ceiling supported by ornamented pillars. We notice there the exquisite wood carving on the ceiling—the figure of Narada. From the green room are two entrances into the stage and between them is located the musical instruments. All around this central flat there are pillars to support the roofing. The roof is copper sheeted and adorned by three golden domes. The whole forms an imposing structure. It is a general rule that the theatre should be in front of the temple to its right, so that the actors will be facing idol when they act.

This takes us to the end of our present study of the Kerala Theatre. I have in the course of the paper surveyed sixteen varieties of representations popularly current in Kerala. I may not have exhausted the varieties and types my descriptions have been meagre and scrappy and this could not be otherwise for the information on the subject has to be collected from strolling bands of actors. However, enough I believe, has been said to show that here is a little known but wide field for research which promises to elucidate some aspects of our ancient culture.

CHAPTER X

THE ORIGIN OF INDIAN DRAMA*

BY AMULYA CHARAN VIDYABHUSAN

Historical records relating to ancient India make it abundantly clear that from the remotest times Indians have been keen enthusiasts of music.

Even in the early Vedic period, Aryan women would devote much of their time each day to dancing, singing and playing musical instruments. These were diversions they could not even think of foregoing. So assiduously did they cultivate these arts, in fact that not even the most trifling detail would escape their notice. Music, singing and dancing played an important part in the ritual of sacrificial ceremonies, the celebration of festivals and, of course, were indispensable on all occasions of sport or merry-making.

From an early age both boys and girls were given dancing and singing lessons, though actually the girls virtually appropriated dancing as their exclusive domain.

In the Rig-Veda (10,85) we find

*Semah prathamo Vivide Gandharvo vinda uttarah
Trityo Agnushte patisturnvaste manushvajah* RK 40

The daughter was first married to Soma, next, to Gandharva and then to Agni. Last of all she was given in marriage to a man. From this Vedic pronouncement it is to be inferred that girls were first taught to prepare Soma juice, next, they were instructed in dancing, after that they were trained in the procedure of sacrificial ceremonies. Only, after all these stages of instruction were they given in marriage.

A line in the Rig-Veda testifies to the fact that it was customary for girls to sing while engaged in the preparation of Soma juice. So common was dancing among girls that, in the Vedic period, even servant girls would attain a high stage of proficiency in the art. There is a passage in the Black Yajurveda (1-5-10) which describes a scene where 'Maruhiya' fire is burning while all around it servant girls carrying water pitchers on their heads are dancing and stamping their feet rhythmically on the ground. Songs accompanied the dance. This is a truly delightful picture!

* Translated by Praup Bonuejee from the original Bengali article published in "Prabasi", 1336 B S

Men ignorant of music were not popular with girls. The latter were so well versed in music that they would pray for a husband who was familiar with and appreciated the musical arts (Black *Yajurveda*—6—1—6). It seems that the dearest wish of people at that time was to laugh and dance their way through life.

It is expressly stated in the *Kausitiki Brahmana* (29 5) that dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments formed an important part of certain Vedic rites. Chanting was practised from the earliest Vedic times. It is said that Saraswati would dance to the far vibrating rhythmic beat of the contrasting accented and unaccented tones of the chanting Vedic priests and that it was out of this that Prajapati Brahma discovered the metrical scheme.

San a vedadadim item sanjagat a p tamahah

The time came when both those who supervised the sacrificial rites as also those who simply came to watch began to find irksome the dull chanting of the sacrificial priests which seemed to clash most harshly with the recitations of the officiating priests. It became necessary to devise some means whereby the general public could be drawn to and entranced by the sacrificial ceremonies. To remedy the defects in the services a new class of priests known as Udgatas were brought into being. It was their duty to chant at the sacrificial ceremonies. The chants were lines from the Rig Veda set to music. It is apparent, therefore, that the origins of a cultivated knowledge and development of the musical arts lie in the Sama Veda. It was after this that the fountain of music started to gush.

It was incumbent on all at that period to conduct their sacrifices strictly according to the Vedic rites and music played an important part in the ceremonies. In the conduct of the Asvamedha yajna (Horse Sacrifice) two 'Vina' players were required to play their instruments. One of these was to be a Brahmin who would play by day and the other a Kshatriya who performed at night. For the Purushamedha yajna (Human Sacrificial Ceremony) the Vina and a great many other musical instruments were played. There would also be songs and dances. In the Mahavrata ceremony there was a large variety of both songs and dances. While this ceremony was in progress young girls would dance all around the sacrificial grounds. Before their dance was completed married women too would join in a dance.

There was even something approaching drama associated with this ceremony. Quarrels and battles would be simulated. Disputes staged over the sale of 'Soma' and the representation of a battle between Sudras and Aryans were scenes well worth watching during the Mahavrata service.

There is a reference in the Rig-Veda to dancing to the musical instrument 'Mandira', which was then known as an 'Aghati'. In regard to the Purushamedha yajna there is a reference to the forcible introduction of drummers. These drummers were called 'Adambitraghat'.

There were many types of 'Vina' in those days. One was called the 'Karkari'. Another, constructed out of knotted creepers, was known as the 'Kandavin'. This latter instrument was used for the Mihabhrata service. Yet another variety of 'Vina' known as a 'Ban' would also be played at the same ceremony.

A special institution of the Vedic Age was that of the 'Sabhi' (Assembly) and 'Samiti' (Association). At these Assemblies and Associations village and parochial matters were regularly discussed. They also served, however, as centres of entertainment cultural pursuits and relaxation. In some ways they were similar in these respects to the clubs of today. People would drop in and chat, games would be organized, recitations, delivered lessons arranged in dancing, singing and the playing of musical instruments, and debates on different subjects would be held from time to time. The Vedic Aryans devoted much of their time to these occupations. Drama was unknown, however and not a single reference to theatres or plays is to be found. It is impossible to determine precisely how drama originated in India. Writing in dialogue form, particularly in the shape of question and answer, was a popular mode of expression among the Vedic and Pauranic writers. Indeed, this form descended intact to many post-Pauranic writings too. The form is very common in Sanskrit literature. In many parts of the Rig-Veda there are to be found lengthy conversations between gods and 'Rishis' (Seers). In particular, reference may be made to the dialogues of Pururava and Urvashi (10, 95), Varuna and Indra (4, 42) and Yama and Yami (10, 10).

It would hardly be an exaggeration to call the Puranas a succession of dialogues between different people. Much dialogue is also to be found in the Upanishads. Though no actual drama appears during the Vedic Age there is much of dancing, singing, mimicry, theatrical gestures and dialogue. It is probable that these gradually changed and assumed a new form. This seems a logical conclusion as songs and dances play so important a part in Indian drama. These are the clues to the origin of drama that are to be found in the literature of the Vedic Age. If in no other section, a suggestion of drama is apparent in the question and answer dialogue between Pani and Sarama in the 10th book of the Rig-Veda (Sukta 108). It is a lengthy passage taking up eleven verses. The substance of three of these verses is given below to serve as examples.

PANIS AND SARAMA

1) Panis—What is it that has brought you here? It is indeed a long journey that you have undertaken and one, moreover, that can never be accomplished if you should look back even once. What special treasure do we possess that should have drawn you here? How many nights did you spend on the way? How did you manage to cross the river?

2) Sarama—I come as Indra's envoy Panis, you have acquired great wealth of cattle here. I desire to take your herds. It was the water that protected me. The water was afraid that I might leap over it and go my way and thus was I able to cross the river.

3) Panis—So, Sarama, you have come as Indra's envoy, have you? What is he like, this Indra of yours? What is his appearance? He may come here if he chooses and we shall receive him as a friend. He may take charge of our cows.

A study of Vedic literature goes to show that originally dancing was concerned with rhythmic steps only and it was later that appropriate body movements were introduced. Little by little, singing too was added. At that time people were in the habit of making a few amorous gestures before starting to dance. Gradually, amorous gestures and an exhibition of coquetry became formally incorporated in the dance pattern. It is probable that along with this there were also introduced such features as mimicry, theatrical gestures and dialogue. This, in turn, led to the evolution of drama proper. At first the performer was only required to make graceful and attractive body and hand movements while dancing. That is exactly the definition of dancing as given in *Nartaka-Nirnaya* (13th Century).

*Angaviksheparaisishvam Janachuttanurajnani
Natena darsitam yatra nartanam kathivat tada*

There is no reference to drama in the literature of the 'Sutras'. At a later period a few references are to be found. Panini (4-3-110 & 111) refers to two 'Sutras', one the 'Nata-Sutra' and the other the 'Bhikshu Sutra'. The author of the former he names as Shilabhi and of the latter as Patasarya. The 'Bhikshu-Sutra' must be the 'Brahma-Sutra'. The 'Nata-Sutra' referred to cannot be traced. Panini states in the first line (4-3-110) that Shilabhi was the author and goes on to say in the following line (4-3-111) that it was spoken by a 'Rishi' named Krishasta. Panini is the first to use the term 'Nata'. Nowhere is it to be found in Vedic literature. Panini has defined the term 'Nata' as the rules followed by the 'Natas' (Performers). But whether or not there was any distinction in Panini's days between 'Natyā' and 'Nṛtā' (Dance) cannot be ascertained. In

Sanskrit the term 'Nrt' is used in place of 'Nata', and 'Nrt' in Sanskrit means 'to dance'. No word can be found in the Sanskrit language which expressly means 'to act in drama'. But there is a word in Prakrit—'Nata' which does mean precisely this.

There were, broadly speaking two classes of people in ancient India, an upper class and a lower class. The former spoke Sanskrit and the latter Prakrit. It would be more precise, actually, to say that a small section only of the upper class, the most scholarly group, spoke Sanskrit. Moreover women even of the upper class but rarely spoke Sanskrit, and would habitually use Prakrit. Prakrit in fact, was the popular language and since scholars then, as indeed at all times, were but few in number a mere handful of people would regularly converse in Sanskrit. It is doubtful if the term 'Nata' originated from this select group. It is more likely that it was borrowed by them from Prakrit when drama came into being. In Panini's time, therefore, as also in that of his great commentator Patanjali, the learned few would converse in Sanskrit and the general public in Prakrit. The word 'Nata' is found in Panini's Works and is also referred to in Patanjali's Commentary. The former dates back to at least the 8th century B.C. and the latter to the 2nd century B.C. It may be safely assumed, therefore, that the word 'Nata' along with drama proper came into being certainly not later than the 8th century B.C. Bharata who is of a later period than Panini, defines 'Nata' as a person who acts (imitates) the various situations prevailing in the world, as associated with emotional states and sentiments.

*Nata iti dhatu artha bhutam nata yaati loka vrittantam
Rasabhabasamjuktah jasmat tasmat nato bhavet*

THE BIRTH OF DRAMA AS RELATED IN THE NATYASAstra

Mahendra and other gods requested Brahma to create a fifth Veda for all classes of people. Deciding to do so he brought together the four Vedas. He then composed the *Natyā-Veda* (Veda of Drama). From the *Rig-Veda* he extracted the requisite words from the *Sama-Veda* the portion relating to music and songs, from the *Yajur-Veda* the quality of acting and from the *Atharva-Veda* the element of *Rasas*. Then, seeing the sage Bharata standing before him he said, "The Festival of Indra's Banner is now being celebrated. Use the *Natyā-Veda* at this function."

The play that Bharata staged on this occasion depicted the defeat of the demons by the gods. This theme infuriated the demons who tried to obstruct the performance. In a fit of rage Indra then seized the banner and with the flagpole belaboured the demons so furiously that they crumbled to pieces. From this incident the Banner of Indra Festival came to be known as 'The Crumbling-up Festival' (Jāgarotsab).

The presentation of two plays are referred to in Bharata's *Natyasastra*. At the beginning of the fourth chapter Bharata addresses Brahma saying—"The stage has been set up in heaven Prayers to the god of the stage have been completed Command me now as to what play is to be performed" At Brahma's command there was then staged at these premises his own play 'Amrita Manthana' The gods were delighted with the performance But Mahadeva had not seen this and Brahma pressed him to see a play On his agreeing to do so Brahma instructed Bharata to get his dramatic troupe prepared Behind the Himilayas the play 'Tripuradah'i was presented specially for Siva (Mahadevn) The acting delighted him, but noting the absence of any dances in the performance he said

*Yaschayam puri arangastu traya suddhah pravojtah
Etah ummritaschayam 'Chitro' nama bhavishvati*

Natyasastra 4/14

The 'Poorbaranga' that you have exhibited is quite well But it would have been much better if you had added dance to it' On hearing Mahadeva Svayambhu asked him to show the various movements of dance Mahadeva then called in Tandu and said "Pravojam anuharanam aksa Bharatava vam — *Natyasastra 4/6*

At Mahadeva's command Tandu gave Bharata detailed instructions in the art of dancing As dancing was thus originally taught by Tandu it is commonly referred to a 'Tandava'

After this Bharata would stage plays in heaven in which gods, demi-gods and 'Apsaris' (Heavenly nymphs) would take part These performers gradually became adept in the art and started composing plays themselves In one of the plays composed by them there were some slighting references to 'Rishis' (Seers) The Rishis were deeply offended when they saw this play and laid a curse as follows on the hundred or so performers who had taken part in it

*Yasunadajnananmadonmatta na chichchavnavam itah
Tasmad etad bhu bhavatam kuperum nasam eshyar,
Rshinani Brahma manu nancha sa na avasamagame
Nirbrahmanana turabhu (Etc) tali Sudrocharo bhavishvati*

Natyasastra Ch 36

This brought about their fall and their reduction to the state of 'Sudras' (The lowest caste) Bharata and a number of gods then implored the seers for forgiveness Taking pity, the 'Rishis' withdrew the first part of the curse Shortly afterwards Nahush conquered heaven After seeing some plays performed in heaven he requested Bharata to arrange for stage performances at his capital city Bharata then ordered his company of a hundred to come to Nahusha's kingdom on earth There they per-

formed plays assisted by earthly women. These women had children by them who also grew up to be great actors. Later, when freed from the curse, the company returned to heaven.

It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about the origin of drama from the descriptions found in Bharata's 'Natyasastra'. It can be safely deduced however that plays and theatres came into existence before this Sutra was written. It is also certain that at that period women too would take part in stage performances.

Doll dances were in vogue in India at a very ancient period. There are references to these in the Mahabharata. Strings were used for these doll dances. The man who manipulated the strings which caused the dolls to dance was called the 'Sutradhara' (Stringholder). Later when actual men and women started taking part in plays the stage director was still called the Stringholder (Sutradhara) although, of course, there was no need for the use of strings. This clearly proves that doll-dancing is more ancient than drama. Although drama did not actually spring from doll-dancing the latter certainly assisted in the development of the former.

In the old days the common people would perform plays in their normal spoken language. But it should always be borne in mind that plays formed part of a religious ceremony. Plays were presented to the general public in the form of 'Yatras', and this term establishes the fact that plays were part of a religious ceremony as it denotes a function connected with some festival in honour of a god or goddess. Even today the plots of many plays presented to the public are drawn from stories in the Ramayana and the Mahabharata about gods and goddesses or heroes and heroines.

When rulers became interested in stage plays the quality of drama rapidly improved and the Sanskrit language began to be used on the stage. On occasions such as the Spring Festival etc it became customary for plays to be staged in the rulers' palaces and court poets started writing plays. For the general public however, plays continued to be presented in 'Yatra' form in open fields.

In Asoka's first Rock Edict the word 'Samaj' is used in two different senses. The following passage occurs in the writings at Girnar.

1 *Prabhū hitavyam na cha saniajō katavyo bahukam
Dosam samajamhi pasati devanam Piyadasi Raja*

2 *Asti Pitu e kacha samaja sadhumata Devanam piyasa*

D. R. Bhandarkar (*Indian Antiquary* 1913, pp. 255-58) and N. G. Majumdar have discussed the term 'Samaj' at considerable length. From many examples drawn from both Brahmanic and Buddhist literature (*Ind. An.* 1918, pp. 221-23), the former

has effectively demonstrated that the word 'Samaj' has two meanings. In the above Edict of Asoka the word 'Samaj' in the first line is used to mean a place where people could be entertained with songs, dancing and other forms of amusement, and it is clear that Asoka regarded these as sacred institutions. Majumdar supports this interpretation. He points out that Vatsayana, in his 'Kama-Sutra' (pp 49-51 Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series) has referred to 'Samaj' in connection with the staging of plays. He has described them as religious institutions of the period. 'Vatsayana says that custom required in those days that the priests in charge of the temple of Saraswati should arrange for a 'Samaj' on each day that ended a lunar fortnight or month. Actors from elsewhere would come and perform. The plays staged on these occasions were known as 'Prekhnam'. On the following day the priests would congratulate the actors and after that another play would be staged if necessary. Performances could also be stopped if the audience so desired.'

From Vatsayana's statement it becomes clear that 'Samaj' was a form of drama with strong religious associations for it was at the temple of Bageswari Saraswati, the goddess of drama and theatres, that it would be performed.

From the Buddhist 'Jatakas' it becomes apparent that 'Samaj' was used in the sense of stage plays. From the 'Kanab Jataka' we also learn that there were various groups of actors who would perform in different towns and villages.

There is a reference in the Ramayana (2 67-15) to plays and actors. In 'Sloka' 2-67-3 the word 'Natakanismaha' is used. In 'Sloka' 2-1-27 the word 'Byamisrakasu' of mixed origin is used to denote a stage play. Keith has stated that there is nowhere in the Ramayana any suggestion of stage plays. This statement would appear to be inaccurate, for, in the Ajodhya Kanda of the Ramayana (57-15) the undernoted lines are to be found:

*Narajake janapade prahrshitanatanartakali
Utsavaischa samajaischa vardhante rashtren ardhurah*

Natas remain in a very happy state in festivals and society, that is in dramatic representation, but their welfare is not promoted in a kingdom without a king. People considered stage plays a means of extending the influence of the state. Rulers too probably supported theatres as a medium of public education. References to drama are to be found in the cave edict traced on cave walls at Nasik in the 19th year of the reign of Pulamayi, the son of Vasistha, as also in the edict of the emperor Kharbel at Hathigumpha. Pulamayi gained greatly in popularity with his people by arranging for plays to be staged at festivals 'Gandhaba-Bedabudha' King Kharbel*, in the third year of his

* *Journal of the Behar and Orissa Research Society*, 1917
p. 455

reign, delighted his subjects by setting up an institution to stage plays at festivals

Sanskrit drama is bound by a number of strict rules, but is rich in art and skill. Dramatists must adhere closely to the regulations laid down in the 'Sastras'. There is a special 'Sastra' known as the 'Natyasastra' which embodies these rules governing the composition of stage plays. Detailed instructions are given regarding matters such as the qualities necessary in one who aspires to be a skilled actor, the language and style to be used in dramatic works, the type of plot that is suitable etc. The Sanskrit play does not attempt to present a realistic view of everyday life. It relies largely on evoking the right sentiments (Rasas). The play's purpose is accomplished if this evoking of sentiments appropriate to the theme is brought about by the grace and skill of the language and gestures. To appreciate to the full a Sanskrit play it is necessary to have a knowledge of these 'Rasas'.

It is difficult to determine the precise age of Sanskrit Drama, as it has not yet been ascertained exactly how or when it evolved. The specimens to be found in the available literature belong to a stage when the art had developed somewhat. No specimens are available of this art in its infancy.

It was believed for some time that 'Mrichchakatika' was the oldest known Sanskrit play. This error was dispelled when Sylvain Levi published his book 'Le Theatre Indien' which convinced people that this play was written at a much later date. The 'oldest known Sanskrit play acknowledged to have been written in the 4th century A.D. is therefore 'Malabikagnimitra'. Kalidasa, the author of the play, was a poet who lived in the reign of Vikramaditya the second Chandragupta which lasted from 375 A.D. to 413 A.D. But Kalidasa himself acknowledges in this play that many excellent works of drama had appeared before then. From the prologue of the play we learn the names of such distinguished precursors of Kalidasa in the dramatic art as Dhabak, Saumillya, Kabiratna etc. No complete play by any of these dramatists has come down to us. In May, 1910, however, the celebrated South Indian scholar Ganapati Sastri discovered in an old library in Travancore ten manuscripts containing portions of plays by a dramatist called Vasa. A few more manuscripts of the same kind were discovered later. The style of this dramatist is excellent but gives no indication of any familiarity on the part of the author with the regulations laid down in the 'Natyasastra'. His is a highly original and individual style.

The exact period at which he lived has not yet been determined, some placing him before the Christian Era and others about the 1st century A.D. But other evidence apart, his language would seem to indicate that he must have lived at

least three or four centuries before Christ. Numerous terms used by him go to show that he was not familiar with Panini's rules.

Nobody knows what Ancient India's first play might have been, but no work of this type earlier than that of Vasa has yet been found.

In Central Asia some plays have been discovered dating back to the Buddhist Period*. None of them are complete however, the palm-leaf manuscripts discovered being the merest fragments of plays written by hand. They date back to the old Kushan period. One of the fragments of plays discovered in Turfan is 'Sariputra Prakarana' or 'Saradvatiputra Prakarana', a nine act Buddhist play by Asvaghosha, the court poet of the Kushan King Kanishka. No one had known of the existence of this play before. The play describes how the two young men Maudgalyana and Sariputra gained Buddha's favour. The rules of the 'Natyasastra' are scrupulously observed in this play. It is an allegory, the hero of the play being a staunch and devout Brahmin as was Maudgalyana.

Buddha, his two disciples, Kaundinya and an ascetic speak both prose and verse in Sanskrit throughout the play. Bidusaka speaks in Prakrit. Introducing Bidusaka in this topic Asvaghosha has been strictly in conformity with the rules of the 'Natyasastra'. It is obvious therefore that the rules of 'Natyasastra' were formed before the time of Asvaghosha and the dramatists also transgressed these.

Extracts from two other plays have also been found in Turfan but so fragmentary are these that their very titles cannot be ascertained. One of these appears to be an allegory on lines somewhat similar to Krishnamishra's 'Probodha Chandrodaya'. The other play is written around a courtesan but in this case too the title is not known.

Sanskrit plays have certain special features. It is usual, for example, for prayers to be offered to Siva or Vishnu before the play begins. There is one instance that of the play 'Nagananda' by Sriharsh, where this preliminary prayer is offered to Buddha. After the 3rd century A.D. a reference to a Buddhist play is found in Abadanasatak (No. 75). This introduces Buddha, Kakuchchandam, Sobhabati and some monks. The 'Kaa-Guaar' of Tibet also mentions this play. In the Abadan referred to above it is stated that a Buddhist play was performed in the presence of the king and that at this performance the directors were in Buddhist costume.

* Koeniglich Preussische Turfan Expeditionen. Kleinere Sanskrit Texte Heft I. Bruchstuecke buddhistischer Dramen Herausgeben Von Heinrich Lueders Berlin, 1911, Das Sariputra prakarana 1911.

‘Sixty-five years ago Fleet sent Keilhorn a number of Sir Alexander Cunningham’s papers. Along with these went copies of two inscriptions on stone. In 1891 Keilhorn published an account of these two inscriptions in the ‘Indian Antiquary’. They were extracts from the two plays ‘Lalitabigraharaj’ and ‘Harakeli’.

The first was a play written in honour of Bigraharajadeva the ruler of Sakambir. The author of this play was the celebrated poet Somadeva. Thirty seven lines from this play had been traced on stone in Nagri characters by Bhaskar, the son of Mahapati in the 12th century A.D. The language of the play is Sanskrit with Prakrit introduced in some portions. No period is mentioned in this inscription. The lines from the play ‘Harakeli’ are also engraved in characters of the same period and this too was executed by Bhaskar. We learn more about him from this inscription. His father Mahapati was the son of Govinda. This Govinda descended from the ‘Hun’ royal family Bhojaraja praises highly the virtues of his grandfather. The following date is found on the inscription.

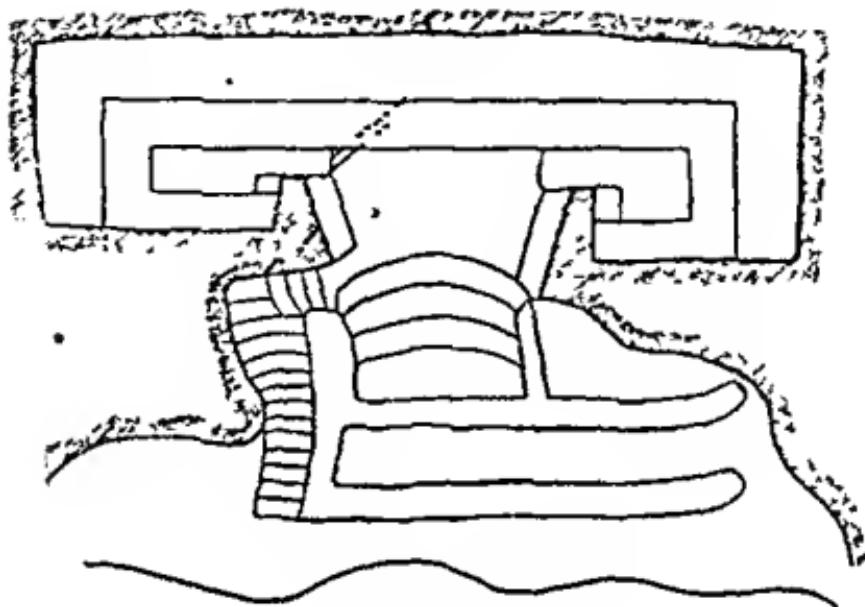
Samvat 1210 Margasudi 5 Adityadine Sravana Nakshatra Makarasthe Chandre Harashanayoge Balavakarane Harakeli Natakam sainaptam Mangalam Mahasrih Kirturijam Maha rajadhiraja Paramesvara Sri-Vigraharaja Devasya

We learn from the Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1921-22 (p. 117) that in one of the ordinances of King Kultunga provision was made for ‘Many types of theatres’. A play was staged at a place called Tirubariur at which the third Rajraj was present. In the 9th year of the reign of the first ‘Rajraj’ there is a reference in one of his ordinances to the granting of a plot of land to an actor. This actor’s name was Kumaran Sikantan (Kumar Srikantha) and he was awarded the land by the ‘Sattanur’ Samaj for his distinguished performance in a play called ‘Aryakuttu’.

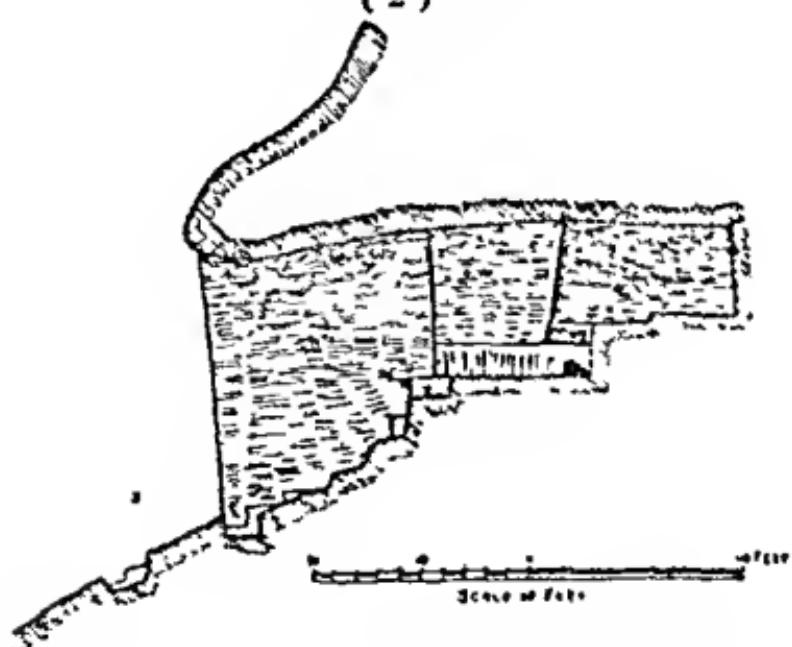
DANCE THEATRE AT RAMGARH

(-1 -)

PLATE V



(2)



Bloch's plans of the Cave-Stage of Sravangiri (See Page 219)

CHAPTER XI

THE DANCE THEATRE AT RAMGARH*

BY AMULYA CHARAN BIDYABHUSAN

The State of S. guja¹ lies to the south-west of Bengal. Rampur is one of the districts of this State, and eight miles south-west of a village in Rampur called Lakshmanpur stands a hill about 2600 feet in height known as Ramgarh.

From Calcutta one may take a train as far as Pendra Road Station which is about 72 miles from Ramgarh Hill. There are wooded hills and rivulets to be crossed before Ramgarh is reached. Just beyond the last rivulet on the way is a village called Pauri. Beyond this is a vast expanse of forest where wild elephants abound, and further on one passes a number of villages and mountain streams. After this comes a place called Pathuri and further on there is a level valley. At the end of this valley lies a village called Udipur, only eight miles from Ramgarh.

There is also a motor service from Ranchi, the route of which passes close by Ramgarh. The area has been developed somewhat in recent years as a result of the discovery in the locality of large deposits of high grade coal, which naturally attracted the attention of Capitalists and Industrialists. A railway station called Bermo has been set up some eight miles from Ramgarh. This is the terminus of a line running from Mahuda Station on the Adra Gomoh line. The motor services between Ranchi and Hazaribagh pass close to Ramgarh. In fact one of the stations on this route is actually called Ramgarh although about thirteen miles of forest clad hills lie between this station and the ruins of the temples and fort of Ramgarh. From here the motor road takes a sweeping curve round the hills towards Mandu. This portion of the road is about three or four hundred feet above the plains and it is quite alarming to look down from here as the road is narrow and the drop is steep.

Cars are driven very slowly along this section, and this gives passengers an excellent opportunity of enjoying at leisure the lovely picture that the magnificent natural surroundings present.

There is a small man made cave known as Munigofa about three quarters the way up the mountain. The entrance is 1 ft

* Translated from the original Bengali article published in 'Navayug', Falgun, 1331 B S by Pratap Bonnerjee

¹ According to some 'Sarguja' or 'Surguja'.

5 inches by 1 ft 4 inches and it is 3 ft 10 inches long inside. Although the floor has filled up somewhat it seems possible that a man might crawl into this cave and squat inside. Further up the hill is a small Siva temple with an image of Siva. Not far from this temple is a neat plot of land surrounded by walls situated about a thousand feet above the dense forest below. There are steps rising fifty feet leading to this spot. When one has climbed forty-eight steps the decrepit skeleton of a temple can be seen. In the ruins of this broken-down structure are two images of Durga, one with twenty hands and the other with eight hands as also an image of Hanuman and one of Siva with eight hands. The summit of the hill is about 100 ft above this. A further climb brings one to a high valley. Beyond this valley is another ruined old temple, completely collapsed except for one of the inner walls. Here there are images of Lakshmana, Janaki and Janaka. Situated in the valley flanking the summit are a waterfall and pool. Legend has it that Sita once bathed here along with Rama and Lakshmana. A fair is

After passing through Hatiphora tunnel one comes in sight of the entrances to two caves. These caves are named Yogivara and Sita bengara. Legend has it that the latter was once inhabited by Sita. The river Rayur flows behind the hill and the stream in this section is known as Mandakini.

The Sita bengara cave is 6 ft. high inside or even less in some places. "At the far end of the cave a high platform runs round the walls. Under this is a drain running towards the wall. Some boles have been carefully cut in the platform." The entrance to the cave is 17 ft. wide and the cave is 44 ft. long all told. At the centre it is about 12 ft. 10 in. wide and about 6 ft. high. The walls all around have been cut and treated and high stone seats are set around the walls. On three sides there are two tiers of seats, the inner set being two inches higher than the outer one. The side with the double bench facing the entrance is 8 ft. 6 in. wide. The seats behind the entrance are set rather lower than the rest. There are small stone seats by the walls.

A few broken images are to be seen on these stone seats it is true, but these images have no connection with the cave whatever. Outside and leading to the entrance to the cave there are semi-circular shaped tiers of stone seats. Begler considers that these were meant to serve as stairs. Bloch disagrees, however, saying that had they been intended for use as stairs they would surely have been located more appropriately for convenient access. There is no means of entering the cave from the south, so why should stairs be placed at this spot too, he enquires. He points out in particular that there seems no point in taking the trouble to cut stairs from the north end to the west end. Ball suggests that these may have been constructed to serve as outlets for the bathtwater of the cave dwellers. They cannot be considered suitable means of drainage, however, for water would tend to accumulate here rather than flow down.

After careful observation Bloch stated that they had not been constructed to serve either as stairs or drains. However, as they had been laboriously prepared, they must have been intended for some special purpose. He concluded that they must have been constructed as seats for those watching a stage play or other form of entertainment performed within the cave.

The benches have been worn away in parts by rainwater. Both Bloch and Ball have prepared plans of this spot. The former's plan is reproduced elsewhere. This plan may not give one an exact idea of the layout but another illustration prepared by him makes things a little more clear. This illustration too is reproduced elsewhere. (See Plates)

The line at the bottom of the first illustration does not mark the spot where the premises end as there is more land beyond this sloping downwards. Bloch states that there is ample room

here to erect a stage for this small, egg shaped theatre cut in stone and that the stone seats could easily accomodate an audience of fifty or sixty people

Bloch has photographed these premises. The stairs have come out quite clearly in his photograph. They are to be seen on the left side only, there being no stairs on the right. The interior of the cave is oblong shaped 46 ft long and 24 ft wide. On three sides there are wide stone seats. These are about 2 ft high and 7 ft wide and assume a terraced appearance as the front row of seats are 2 inches lower than the rear row. The floor is slightly lower at the entrance than where the seats have been set up.

There has been much controversy as to whether or not Bloch was correct in stating that this place was used as a theatre. Two large holes have been dug in the corners of the floor near the entrance. Bloch states that these were used for the insertion of wooden poles. He believes that after the audience had come in a curtain would be set up on these poles to keep out the chilly air of winter nights. The audience would then settle down in the seats and dances and so forth would be performed in front of the curtain veiling the entrance. From Bloch's descriptions we can readily visualise this egg shaped theatre with rising semi-circular tiers of seats.

Burgess has raised strong objections to the thesis that this cave was used as a theatre. He states that there simply is no room to stage a play in these premises. He demands more convincing proof before he can be persuaded that this place was in fact, used as a theatre.

Asit Kumar Haldar paid a visit to Ramgarh. His opinion in this matter is given below.

"In the opinion of Dr Bloch and certain other archaeologists this constitutes the only known example of an ancient Indian theatre fashioned somewhat on the lines of the theatres of ancient Greece. There are four large holes in the ground outside the cave. They have drawn the conclusion that these were used for inserting poles to support a curtain, and they consider that the semi circular flights of stairs leading up to the cave were used to seat the audience. These stairs being outside, however, people sitting on these would not be able to see actors performing within the cave. There seems no valid reason to place a theatre behind the audience with a curtain in front. Nor is there enough room outside for performing dances or staging other forms of entertainment as there is a sheer cliff beyond. It is possible that some sort of wooden stage might have been set up outside on which plays could be staged but there is no evidence that any such stage existed."

He expressed as his own opinion that this cave was used as a residence and also as a centre for a small scale organisation.

devoted to the cultivation of music, dancing and singing •Sarat Chandra Ghoshal states that there is no convincing evidence that this cave was ever used as a theatre

In view of this controversy it would be interesting to try to determine whether or not this cave could possibly have been used as a theatre

Burgess' objection to this thesis is given below

Had this been so, we should naturally expect that such would be found not only in this solitary instance in remote Sarguja, but that other and better examples would certainly occur among the hundreds of rock excavations still fairly complete in western India. Yet no trace of such has been found elsewhere

It is true that nowhere else in India has any cave been discovered which can be proved to have been used as a theatre. But should suitable evidence be available in the case of the Sitabengara cave, there could be nothing in principle to stand in the way of acknowledging that this was, in fact, used as a theatre. Burgess himself has stated that in ancient India caves were probably used at times for entertainment of various forms. He has even cited some examples. That there were facilities for staging dances in the very temple itself in a Buddhist cave in Aurangabad is made abundantly clear by the illustration published in the report of the Arch Surv. Western India, Volume III, pl. liv, Fig. V

In Nasik too there are two caves which were used as premises for dancing and singing. Looking at them even today one is able to sense the atmosphere of dance and song. The arrangements within the Uparkot cave in Junagadh will also convince those who visit it that it was used for similar purposes.

There were also facilities for dancing and singing performances in the caves of Kuda and Mahad. Not merely that, but the arrangement of the seats at the side would suggest that these caves were also used for staging plays. There are pictures of these caves in 'Cave Temples' by Ferguson and Burgess (Pls. IV, V, I, XIX, XXVI etc) and Arch Surv. Western India (Vol. IV, pls. VII to X).

It is not to be imagined that caves were used only as places where ascetics would contemplate deeply. There are many passages in ancient literature that go to show that caves were also used for amusements singing and dancing. Professor Luder has picked out a number of such references to caves.

The celebrated poet Kalidasa, when describing the Hima layas in his work 'Kumarasambhaba' (1-10) speaks of 'Dari-grihas'. Hunters would use these cave dwellings for musical soirees.

*Banecharanam banitasakhanam darigrhotsangani-
• shaktabhasah*

*Bhabanti vatroushadhiy o rajanyamatailapurah
suratapradipah*

Three 'Slokas' later (f—14) the poet says —' Youths and girls would frolic in these mountain caves When, in the course of the romping the girls' clothes were taken off, they would feel ashamed A cloud would then suddenly stretch itself across the entrance to the cave, serving thereby as a curtain "

*Yatramisukakshepa ilajitanam vadrichchhaya
• kimpurushangananam
Darigrhotsangav ilamvivum asturaskarim o
jalada bhavanti*

These descriptions of Kalidasa contain many embellishments of imagery no doubt but are based on facts For example, the poet would never have described such frolics in caves if these places were not used for such purposes

Then again in 'Meghdut' (1—26) he refers to sport and frolics in a cave near Bidisha The words addressed to the cloud are

"When you desire to rest, stay awhile on Ramagiri near Bidisha The countless 'Kadamba' flowers blossoming here will make you think that with your arrival the hairs of the mighty mountain have stretched out and stood on end The caves of that mountain send out the seductive perfumes of courtesans and thus bear witness to the youthful ardour of the citizens "

*Nitchairakhiyam gni madhu asesatatra visramaheto
Statsamparkat pulakutam a praudhapushpah kadambah
Yah panyasitirati parimalodgarbhnagarana
Muddamani prathayati silavesni abluryaubannam*

The word "Silabesma" used by the poet has been confirmed to mean 'cave' by Mallinath We gain no information from the writings of Kalidasa regarding the arrangements and fittings of such caves From the 14th 'Sloka' of the first part of "Kumarasambhaba" however, we learn that entrances to caves would be covered with a curtain According to Kalidasa, courtesans inhabited these caves There is also evidence that plays would be performed in these caves, in which courtesans would take part

An ancient stone inscription at Muttra gives a list of a courtesan's gifts The courtesan in question was named Nada Nada describes herself—(In this inscription) as the daughter of the 'Lensobhika' Danda The word 'Lensobhika' means an actress who performs in a cave In Patanjali's Commentary, in the section where he discusses 'those who act' he mentions the word 'Shobhika' (Panini—3—1—26—Commentary No 15) It is apparent, therefore, that caves were not used exclusively by

ascetics and seers, but also by courtesans and actresses and their lovers

It is clear, therefore, that plays could be staged in caves and it was because they were frequently staged in caves that Bharata writes in his 'Natysastra' (2/69) that theatres should be shaped like caves

*Karshnayasam pratidvaram dvaraviddham na karayet
Karyah sailaguhakaro Dubhumurnat�amandapah*

This is repeated in the 'Dasakumar Charita' (Bombay Ed P 108, 14—Peterson Ed P 10, 23)

Now the question arises as to how plays were staged. Stages were used in ancient times and were known as 'Rangapith'. The Natysastra states (2—86) that a stage should be 8 cubits in size. The theatre premises should be measured out so that it should be 64 cubits in length and 32 in width

*Chatuhshashthikaran kuryaddirghatena tu mandapam
Dvatrimsatam cha vistarain martyanam yo bhavediha*

Half the theatre was to be used for the auditorium and the stage was to be set up in the other half. Right behind the stage there was to be a 'Ranga Sirsha'. Here there were to be six wooden platforms of four cubits each. This was the portion where prayers to the gods were offered. There is a platform of this type in the Ramgarh Dance Theatre which was probably used for worship. Beyond the Ranga Sirsha were the dressing rooms. There were two doors connecting the dressing rooms with the Ranga Sirsha.

One of the regulations in the 'Natysastra' lays down that there should be one or two doors connecting the dressing rooms with the Ranga-Sirsha.

In the Ramgarh cave it would have been possible to set up a stage alongside the auditorium. The seating arrangements too seem to conform to the two undernoted regulations of the Natysastra's second advice

* * * *

*Stambhanam valiyataschapi sopanakrti Pithakam 79
Ishtakadarubhish karyam prekshakanam nivesanam*

80

As this design has been followed in the Ramgarh cave it seems probable that it was prepared as a theatre. Moreover, it is customary for theatre premises to have a special inscription known as a 'Yakshalipi'. There is an inscription on the walls of the Sitabengara cave and if it can be accepted as a 'Yakshalipi' the case would seem to be complete.

The inscription has been cut just under the roof on the north side of the entrance. This consists of only two lines. Each line is 3 ft 8 in in length, each character occupying about 2

inches The first portion of both these lines has been obscured by cement

Bloch's rendering of this inscription is as under —

- 1 *Adipayanti hrdayani sabhava garu kavayo*
eratayam
- 2 *Duley rasamitha hasavanubhute kudasphatam*
ebam alam ga (ta)

He translates the sloka as

"Poets venerable by nature kindle the heart who
"At the swing festival of the vernal full moon when frolics
and music abound, people thus (?) tie (around their necks
garlands) thick with jasmine flowers

Bloch has also set down his rendering of a similar inscription
in the Yogimari cave. His accepted reading is (1) Sutanuka
Nama (2) Devadasikyⁱ (3) Sutanuka Nama Devodisikyⁱ (4) Tam
Kamayitha Bala na seyey (5) Devadiney nama Lupadakhey
Bloch's renderings of these are, (1) Sutanuka by name, (2) a
Devadasi, (3) Sutanuka by name, a Devadasi (4) The excellent
among young men loved her (5) Devadonna by name, skilled
in sculpture

A M Boyer, however, interprets these inscriptions differently, and his version is given below

- 1 *Adipayanti hrdayam sa (dha)ra garaka (m) rajo*
en tavam dide basam tyu
• *hi savanubhute kudas tatam eba alam ga (ta)*
- 2 *Sutanuka nama Devadisikyⁱ*
tam kamayitha va lu na seye
Devadine nama Lupa dakkie

(Journal Asiatique Xieme Ser. tom III pp 478)

Hara Prasad Sastri disagrees with both the above renderings. Though he does not specify his reading of the original, his translation makes it abundantly clear that this must have differed widely from those of the other two

He translates the first inscription as follows

I salute the beautifully formed one who shows us the gods
I salute the beautiful form that leads us to the gods He is much
in quest at Varanasi I salute the god given me for seeing his
beautiful form"